The CHARLESTON STAGE in the XVIII CENTURY

EOLA WILLIS

ELIZABETH SULLY, LATER MRS. MIDDLETON SMITH
(BY THOMAS SULLY)

THE CHARLESTON STAGE

IN THE XVIII CENTURY

With Social Settings of the Time

By

EOLA WILLIS

The roots of the present lie deep in the past, and nothing in the past is dead to the man who would learn how the present comes to be what it is.

1924
THE STATE COMPANY
COLUMBIA, S. C.

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TO THE MEMORY
OF
MY FATHER AND MOTHER

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FOREWORD

Charleston's claims to a prominent place in the earliest history of American drama have generally been overlooked, mainly because of the difficulty of obtaining the necessary information.

The history of the Charleston Stage has not until now been written, but it forms so important a part of the annals of the American Theatre that the latter are incomplete without it, for it furnishes a connecting link, hitherto lacking, in the chain of earliest plays in this country. Its history is bound up in the pages of the South Carolina *Gazettes,* the property of the Charleston Library Society, accessible only to students.

Up to the season of 1773-4, which is included in the "History of the American Theatre" by George O. Seilhamer, only slight and imperfect paragraphs and short articles have been given to this city by dramatic historians. The season of 1773-4, instead of inaugurating the Charleston Stage, as is generally stated, formed the fifth season in her third theatre.

To correct inaccuracies and to place Charleston in her proper light upon her own boards, the *Gazettes* have been searched page by page, and every item of theatrical importance or interest extracted from 1734 until January, 1801, and articles touching the Stage in early local publications have been drawn upon.

The result has been most gratifying in bringing to light the *first* American Prologues and Epilogues, the *first* productions of Ballad Opera in this Country, the *first* advertisements and dramatic criticisms, and the *"first nights"* of some of the most desirable acquisitions

to Mr. Douglass' American Company of Comedians, which, up to this time, have been accredited elsewhere.

It is due to the initiative of Charles-Town's earliest newspaper men that the Colonial history of her theatre is preserved.

In chronicling the dawn of the drama in Charles-Town, the facts in the case have been marshaled, and, so far as possible, the *Gazettes* have told the story in their own quaint phraseology, spelling, and capitalization.

A brief survey of epoch-making events in the history of the city during each dramatic season is given in the appropriate chapters.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS ARE MADE TO DR. STANHOPE SAMS FOR AN APPRECIATIVE READING OF THE MANUSCRIPT AND MANY HELPFUL SUGGESTIONS.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

The South Carolina *Gazette,* 1732-1800, Owned by Charleston Library Society.

The MS. "Diary of Mrs. Gabriel Manigault," 1754-1781, Owned by The Historical Society of South Carolina.

McCrady's History of South Carolina.

Rivers' Historical Collections of South Carolina.

The Charleston Daily Courier.

The Charleston News and Courier.

The Nation—news for Bibliophiles.

Old Charleston Pamphlets.

History of the American Theatre, George O. Seilhamer.

All quotations in the articles taken from the old *Gazettes* and other publications adhere literally to the original spelling, capitalization, and punctuation.

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CHAPTER I

Charles-Town's First Theatrical Season
The First American Prologue and Epilogue
The First American Production of Opera.
1735

CHAPTER I

Having been sponsored by a belted Earl and gartered Knights, the Province of Carolina set high hopes in the breasts of her first permanent English settlers, who came over deeply impressed with the Fundamental Constitutions, which promised them not only fair unencumbered acres but a new hereditary aristocracy as well.

The lands persisted, but the hereditary aristocracy died a natural death at the age of fifty, in this land of the free and the brave, but it lived long enough to set its seal. The hewers-out of the land who congregated at Charles-Town blazed the trail, and the populace was soon walking through perfumed hedges of Cherokee rose and jessamine down the broad path of daily advancing civilization and reaching out eager hands for the comforts and amusements which they had left behind them.

Charles-Town was the capital of the province and the Port of Entry of South Carolina, and toward the close of the Colonial period it was said to be the gayest, politest and richest place in America "in the conveniences of luxury."

It was therefore very natural that this town should become one of the first American patrons of the arts and sciences and should foster the drama, and she wove one of the earliest chaplets of the laurels of Thespian art in having given to the New World her first native Prologues and Epilogues, and her Colonial period of 1773-4 flowered into the most brilliant dramatic performances yet given in this country.

So far as is known, the first crude attempts at dramatic performance in Charles-Town began with the advent of Antony Aston, the strolling English player, within her walls. He no doubt came as well fortified to fulfil his dramatic ambitions as he could manage, because he had been casting longing eyes toward the golden coasts of North America several years before he ventured to make his personal tour of discovery.

In Allan Ramsay's book of Poems there is an Epilogue "Spoke by Antony Aston the first night of his acting in winter of 1728," which tends to show that "Blythsom Tony" confided to the Caledonians his high regard for Columbus, and was even then contemplating a visit to the New World. The latter part of the Epilogue runs thus:

> This great Columbus by an idiot crew
> Was ridiculed at first for his just view
> Yet his undaunted spirit ne'er gave ground
> Till he a new and better world had found.
> So I (laugh on—) the simile is bold,
> But faith, 'tis just, for till this body's cold
> Columbus-like, I'll Push for fame and gold.

He made this promise good, and traveled extensively in this country—and returned to England a wiser and a richer man, as shown by his bombastic introduction of himself after his American sojourn:

"The Fool's Opera, or the Taste of the Age, written by Mat Medley and performed by his Company in Oxford," has long been famous among rare book collectors[1] (one having been sold in New York some years ago for $81.00.)

Antony Aston, writing under the pen-name of "Mat Medley," gave as a prefix to the above play a biogra-

[1] "The Fool's Opera," printed without date in London, was probably issued about 1731.

phical sketch of himself with the following introduction:

"My Merry hearts, you are to know me as a gentleman, lawyer, poet, actor, soldier, sailor, exciseman, publican in England, Scotland, Ireland, New York, East and West Jersey, Maryland, (Virginia on both sides Cheesapeek) North and South Carolina, South Florida, Bahamas, Jamaica, Hispaniola, and often a coaster by all the same."

Following this modest estimate of himself, he states that he was the son of Richard Aston, a barrister, and that he was educated in Staffordshire, and continues with an account of his early life.

It is believed that he arrived in the American colonies about 1730, but no date is given in his sketch, which states that he landed, after many vicissitudes, at Charles-Town, S. C., "full of shame, poverty, nakedness, and hunger—turned Player and Poet and wrote one play on the subject of the country."

Four published works by Aston are well known, and a sketch of him was written by William Rufus Chetwood, the Drury Lane Prompter;[1] but research has not yet brought forth his American play, which was almost certainly the first dramatic attempt made in this country.

His "turning Player" here was probably treading a measure, and declaiming some of his best stock-in-trade to such an audience as he could collect around him, but his efforts were doubtless rewarded with sufficient coins of the realm to rehabilitate himself, and it is quite certain that his hunger was appeased.

1 "General History of the Stage," William Rufus Chetwood, Dublin, 1749.

It is always interesting to know the lay of the land when first-things occurred, and as the first Play-Actor touched the friendly shores of Carolina early in the eighteenth century, a glance backward will show the old town as the stroller Antony Aston saw it.

Soon after its settlement Charles-Town became a walled city, the hum and whir of *its* world being guarded from the rest of the world by thick walls and bastions. The wall has gone, but its influence is still felt, and to this day Charleston loves a strong enclosure; and, after these encircling walls had gone, she built strong walls of her own and wrought-iron fences and gateways to shut in her privacy.

In a letter of the Grand Council to Queen Anne's officers in England, written in 1708,[1] the town's defences are described thus: "Charles-Town the chief port in South Carolina by the direction and diligence of our present Governor, Sir Nathaniel Johnson, is surrounded with a regular fortification, consisting of bastions, flankers and half-moons, ditched and pallisaded and mounted with eighty-three guns."

It is strange at the present time to recall that at the intersection of two of Charleston's most notable thoroughfares, where now the Court House, City Hall, St. Michael's Church, and the Post-Office occupy each a corner, there once flowed a stream, for Charleston, like Holland, has reclaimed much of her land from the sea, and at the ravelin or salient angle at the corner of Queen and Meeting Streets was erected Johnson's half-moon battery extending across Broad Street and having two draw bridges. Aston's play on the subject

[1] "Charleston in the Olden Times—Fortifications," May 9, 1868, *The Mercury*.

of the country may well have had a mediæval flavor, written as it was in a walled city surrounded by moats and draw bridges.

While American dramatic historians seem to have made a pretty thorough search of the Northern field, much of the Southern field still lies fallow.

Recent articles in the Nation by Robert Adger Law,[1] called attention to the fact that Seilhamer's "History of the American Theatre" terms the Charleston theatre built in 1773 "the first theatre in South Carolina;" while, as a matter of fact, Charles-Town had a permanent theatre *fifteen years* before the opening of Nassau Street theatre in New York, *thirty-odd years* before the erection of the Southwark in Philadelphia, and almost *forty years* previous to the building of what Seilhamer thought to be the first theatre in this town.

Research has not yet brought forward any Prologues or Epilogues of American authorship nearer the Charleston productions of 1734-6 than those spoken at Williamsburg in 1752, which are claimed to be "the first compositions written for and addressed to an American audience that were preserved." And they appeared *sixteen years after* the Prologue to "The Orphan" which was spoken in Charles-Town.

It has been definitely decided that the first theatre in America was erected in Williamsburg, Virginia, in the second decade of the eighteenth century; the second in New York in 1732; and the third in Charles-Town in 1736; while Philadelphia did not have a playhouse until 1749.

As shown by the old *Gazettes,* Charles-Town (which

1 "News for Bibliophiles," February 27, 1913; April 23, 1914; September 3, 1914.

bore its name in this form from 1670 until 1783, when it was changed by Act of Legislature) had dramatic seasons prior to the Revolutionary War—in 1734-5, 1736-7, 1754, 1763-4, 1766, and 1773-4.

In her early history it was in Charleston's Court-room and in her Council-Chamber that all her entertainments of dancing and the drama were given. The South Carolina *Gazette,* February 17, 1733-4, announces: "At the Council-Chamber on Monday the 26th instant will be a Consort of vocal and instrumental music. Tickets to be had at Mr. Cook's and Mr. Saurean's at 40s. N. B. None but English and Scotch Songs."

From the earliest days Charles-Town encouraged musical performances, but this appears to have been the first public announcement made, and it antedated her first theatrical announcement by one year and a little over a month.

On a fac-simile map, owned by the writer, which was "Published according to Act of Parliament June 9, 1739," is shown, at letter "H," "The Council Chamber above, and Guard-House below;" and at letter "I" the Court-House above and Exchange below."

On the same map is shown the site of the original Theatre, built in 1735 and opened in 1736.

The scale on this map shows the Court-Room above the Exchange to have been a long room, probably the most spacious in the town, and two months before the first theatrical performance took place may be found an advertisement in the *Gazette* dated November 15, 1734-5, which reads:

"At the Court-Room on Monday, 15th December, will

SIR NATHANIEL JOHNSON, ROYAL GOVERNOR OF SOUTH CAROLINA

be a Ball. To begin precisely at 5 o'clock. No person to be admitted but by a printed Ticket. Henry Holt, Master."

"Dancing was constantly taught in Charles-Town from 1734. In this year a dancing school was opened in which the Master, Mr. Henry Holt, lately arrived in the Province, advertizes that he has been taught by the most celebrated Master in England, and danced a considerable time at the Play-House."[1]

It was a red-letter day for the "Inhabitants of Charles-Town" when with sparkling eyes they glimpsed the earliest theatrical notice of Carolina in the *Gazette* of January 18, 1734-5: "On Friday the 24th instant, in the Court-Room will be attempted a Tragedy called 'The Orphan, or the Unhappy Marriage.' Tickets will be delivered out on Tuesday next at Mr. Shepheard's at 40s. each."

The transplanted Englishman of that time clung with tenacity to his old-home pleasures and customs, he already had his hunting, his card-games and dancing, and hailed with delight the announcement of the play. He had no doubt read many of the current English plays in *The Gentleman's Magazine* and *The Imperial Magazine;* and, as early as 1732, Whitmarsh, the first editor of the South Carolina *Gazette,* had advertized among his stock of books "The Fatal Extravagant, a Tragedy," Molière's Plays, and Robin Hood's Opera; but Otway's tragedy, "The Orphan," was new, and they may have read that Colley Cibber made his début in this play as the *Chaplain* and was "filled with vanity and content." They had also had Play-

1McCrady, "History of South Carolina."

books, "Imported and sold by Peter Horry in his store at Mrs. Ramsay's on the Bay."

But it was to Peter Horry's other stock that they now gave attention, and what more natural than that fathers and sons, as well as mothers and daughters, should repair to their shopping district, almost within sight of the Court-Room, where the play was to be held a week later, and inspect Peter Horry's "Lately Imported Brocade Stuffs, Women's Short Cloaks, Men's Scarlet Great Coats, whole suits and single Fly Coats of Broad Cloth: Head Flowers in Boxes, laces, edgings, etc."[1]

Surely the "Head Flowers in Boxes" appealed to many feminine hearts, and the audience that greeted "The Orphan" made a brave appearance, for the American provincials kept in close touch with the fashions of Mother England. The play must have been on the lips of everyone, and not least upon those of the legal profession whose sanctum was to be invaded, and Judge, Jury, and Court officials entered gladly into the festive spirit, willingly stored away legal documents and let in the invading hosts who were to prepare for the Thespian rites and fit up the stage, and convert anterooms, corners, and closets into green-rooms.

Charles-Town's first theatrical season opened no doubt with *éclat*. The curtain was drawn amid deafening applause, followed by an expectant hush—and keen attention to THE FIRST AMERICAN PROLOGUE! This was printed in the South Carolina *Gazette* of February 8, 1734-5 as follows:

[1] South Carolina *Gazette*, January 11, 1734-5.

PROLOGUE spoken to "The Orphan," upon its being play'd at Charles-Town, on Tuesday the 24th of January, 1734-5.

When first Columbus touch'd this distant Shore,
And vainly hop'd his Fears and Dangers o'er,
One boundless Wilderness in View appear'd!
No Champain Plains or rising Cities chear'd
His wearied Eye.—
Monsters unknown travers'd the hideous Waste,
And men more Savage than the Beasts they chac'd.
But mark! How soon these gloomy Prospects clear,
And the new World's late horrors disappear.
The soil obedient to the industrious Swains,
With happy Harvests crowns their honest Pains,
And Peace and Plenty triumph o'er the Plains.
What various Products float on every Tide?
What numerous Navys in our Harbours ride?
Tillage and Trade conjoin their Friendly Aid,
T'enrich the thriving Boy and Lovely Maid.
Hispania, it's true, her precious Mines engross'd,
And bore her shining Entrails to its Coast.
Brittania more humane supplys her wants,
The British sense and British Beauty plants.
The Aged Sire beholds with sweet Surprize,
In foreign Climes a numerous Offspring rize,
Sense, Virtue, Worth and Honor stand confest,
In each brave Male, his prosp'rous hands have blest,
While the Admiring Eye improv'd may trace
The Mother's charms in each chast Virgin's Face.
Hence we presume to usher in those Arts
Which oft have warm'd the best and bravest Hearts.
Faints [sic] our endeavours, rude are our Essays:
We strive to please but can't pretend at praise:
Forgiving Smiles o'er pay the grateful Task,
They're all we hope and all we humbly ask.

This was no doubt known by many to be of local authorship, and the Poet was probably following every line with tense eagerness.

He did not sign his Prologues. He did not know that he was to be acclaimed one of the earliest American Poets, and he could not foresee that these productions of his would be hailed with delight by eager historical students, almost two centuries later, as the "First American Prologues."

The entire offering must have been received with great applause, and the curtain rung down upon satis-

fied faces in front of it and upon satisfied hearts behind it, for surely there was "standing-room only" when the curtain went up and the seats were forty shillings each, and the actors knew they had scored a success.

"The Tragedy of The Orphan" was demanded again, and the *Gazette* announced that it would be acted the second time on Tuesday, January 28. The players, now more at ease and appearing, doubtless, to better advantage than at the first performance, repeated it in an acceptable way, for a third performance was given on February 4.

"The Orphan," and a new "Pantomimic Entertainment in Grotesque Characters, called The Adventures of Harlequin and Scaramouch, with the Burgo-master Trick'd," being added to the bill; and a fourth performance of "The Orphan" was given in the Court-Room, for which evidently the proud author of the first Prologue had had time to summon his Muse again and offer a second, as well as an Epilogue. Both the Prologues were printed in the same issue of the *Gazette,* February 8, and the Epilogue later. The second Prologue to "The Orphan" is as follows:

Encouraged by your Smiles again we dare
Approach the good, the wise, the great, the fair,
Each gentle look each Lovely Face betrays
Kindness beyond our Impotence to please,
Who boast th' Intent alone,—But if tonight,
While tender Pity forms severe delight,
Of real Spleen and formal Wisdom full,
Some count it Virtue to be stiff and dull,
Much may be said in spight of the severe,
For us who dare to speak, and you to hear.
The wisest Mortal e'er beheld the day
Confess'd a Season to unbend and play.
To our attempts such Wisdom must be kind.
Where the Amusement tends to form the Mind:
For Worth distress'd the pitying Fear to drain,
And challenge Grief from Woes which others feign.

Besides, if Pleasures oft repeated cloy,
And of itself Variety's a Joy,
I really can't discern the important Ill,
Tho' it relieve Backgammon or Quadrille:
Or when the Muse has wept, the comic Style
Laughs off our Hearts and Politicks a while:
For spight of the Objections some produce,
Ev'n merry Plays may have their serious Use:
And if they're treated hard, their Fate is such,
'Tis where they're little known, or dreaded much.
No carking Miser of his teeth afraid,
His shillings sinks to see the Miser played:
No wither'd Fool to Bloom and Beauty wed,
Admires the picture of his branching Head:
And if important Mortals, cramm'd with Thought,
Condemns what Addison and Shakespeare wrote,
Fond of our Peace, adverse to all Disputes,
We straight submit, and ask—the Price of Boots,
The good and wise may say—"Abuse has been".
But from th' Abuse ne'er argue to the Thing,
Oft at the Tree do future Culprits spring,
And Thefts increase the more while Felons swing,
Must Convicts therefore out of Goal [sic] be kick'd,
And Robbers 'scape lest Pockets should be Pick'd?
But howsoe'er we fail,—these tender scenes
Have moved the fairest Nymphs and bravest Swains:
The fair and brave shall here the scene pursue
Pathetic, simple, and to many new,
We hope your Favor much, yet scarcely fear,
That one departs for what's recited here,
With greater Risque the bitter Pangs to prove
Of wild desires or ill-conducted Love.

The early plays contained many inelegant and over-frank speeches and allusions, and the more delicate-minded of the audience had evidently voiced their displeasure, for this second prologue alludes to the subject.

But the pantomime, which had been dispensing its medicine of mirth since 22 B. C., was an unalloyed pleasure to all, for our ancestors doted on these plays of motion without sound, and thought, with old Rymer, the English dramatic critic, that "words are a sort of heavy baggage that were better out of the way at the push of action." But Rowe complained in the Prologue to one of his earliest plays—

"Must Shakspeare, Fletcher and Laborious Ben
Be left for Scaramouch and Harlequin?"—

And today we see the motion-picture show claiming far more general attention than the legitimate drama.

The following Epilogue makes mention of the pantomime.

Epilogue to "The Orphan," spoken after the entertainment:

By various Acts we thus attempt to please,
And your Delight persue by different Ways;
To banish Pleasure and prohibit Wit.
But while from Britain's wealthy Cities flow
Much for Necessity and much for Show,
From the old World in miniature we shew
Her choicest Pleasures to regale the new.
For your delight and Use has Otway wrote
And pow'rful Music tunes her warbling Throat,
While other Objects entertain the Sight
And we, you know, can die for your Delight.
Warm'd with th' Applause your Favour now bestows;
It may inspire the Merit you suppose;
If haply your continu'd Smiles produce
The humble Fabrick suited to the Use.
Then from the doubling Arch the Notes shall bound,
And Vaults responsive echo to the sound;
Thence from their Graves pale Ghosts arising slow
Shall clear the injur'd and the guilty show.
From nobler Themes shall loftier Scenes appear,
And Cato urge what Senators may hear;
Or Congreve's Drama shake the laughing Dome,
With it unmatch'd by Athens or by Rome.
The little Term that Heaven to Mortals spares,
Is daily clouded with prolonging Cares;
No real Virtue blames the pleasing strife,
To blend Amusement with the Shades of Life;
Wise, innocent, serene, she smiles at Ease,
Nor hanging Witches, nor adjuring Plays.

On February 18, "The Opera of Flora, or Hob in the Well," with the dance of the two Pierrots and the Pantomime of "Harlequin and Scaramouch" was an announcement of great American import, for it heralded to the country *for the first time* a musical play upon its shores. "Flora" was one of Cibber's most successful

ballad-operas, adapted from Dogget's comedy of the "Country Wake," and held the affections of American music-lovers for many years. This first form of Opera consisted of a dramatic piece—generally comedy or farce — interspersed with popular songs. The quest for the first operatic cast was void of results; it probably will always remain a mystery, but as to the orchestra one can hazard a guess.

Among the earliest *Gazettes* may be found advertisements for harpsichords, and as Charles-Town had Dancing-Masters very early in her history, and all Dancing-Masters were also fiddlers, it may be assumed that if the "Troupe" did not carry with them a performer upon the Harpsichord, the Organist of St. Philip's could have been pressed into service; and that the favorite Dancing-Master, Mr. Henry Holt, who had given a ball in 1734, and who had danced in England at the Play-House, was more than likely the "first violin," and there is very little doubt that among the music-loving citizens was found a second.

The next play was Dryden's "Spanish Fryar" which was first advertised for Tuesday, March 25. On Thursday, March 27, the season closed with a repetition of "The Spanish Fryar," "for the Benefit of *Monimia,*" and more than likely all the play-loving souls of the town turned out in full force to honor the occasion and to bid *au revoir* to the leading lady; for to her efforts to please and to her accomplishments in various roles must be attributed the first impulse of the people to go to work, as soon as she departed, to make arrangements for the building of a theatre that would be finished in time for the opening of a second dramatic

season, with *Monimia* in the heroine's rôle of the first play that Charlestonians saw in their own theatre. The theatre was opened in February, 1736. This leading lady, who was *Monimia* in "The Orphan," left no clue as to her real identity; and on her return to Charles-Town she was still called *Monimia.*

FIRST SEASON'S PERFORMANCES

1735

Jan. 24 — The Orphan or the Unhappy Marriage.....Otway
Jan. 28 — The Orphan
Feb. 4 — The Orphan; Harlequin and Scaramouch
Feb. 7 — The Orphan
Feb. 18 — Opera, Flora or Hob in the Well [The first Opera given in America]; .....Cibber
Dance of the Two Pierrots; Harlequin and Scaramouch
Mar. 25 — The Spanish Fryar .....Dryden
Mar. 27 — The Spanish Fryar

CHAPTER II

America's First Signed Epilogue
and
Charles-Town's First Theatre
1735-6.

CHAPTER II

The historian tells us that merchandise and trade were the foundation stones of most of the great fortunes in South Carolina, and Ramsay says that her commerce was of "noble origin," as its first merchants were the Lords Proprietors themselves.

The strolling players who came for the opening of the first theatre found the town like a beehive, humming with business. The little shops were gay with bright blankets and beads and cloths and gleaming hatchets and knives alluringly displayed to catch the eye of the Indian brave who had deer skins and other peltry to barter.

One of the most romantic glimpses into the past concerning the country blazed by the Redman between the upper portion of the State and Charleston is in a description of the old Indian Trail leading from the town of Keowee.[1]

It tells us that as early as 1717 the trails of the Cherokee ran by the most direct route from their towns down to the mouth of the Ashley river. "Through lanes of verdure crossing blossom-decked streams and flowing through valleys fertile as the land of Egypt," and the hedges on every side a feast of beauty in the springtime with the waxen petals and golden-hearted roses named by the Pale Face "Cherokee" for the Indian tribe that first enjoyed its loveliness.

When the peltry traffic was inaugurated the Cherokees became so dependent upon the English that it was soon necessary to start pack-horse trains, and the

1"Historic Old Keowee Trail," Sarah R. Collett, Greenwood *Index-Journal.*

Keowee Trail became a great central highway between Charleston and the mountain-lanes of the Cherokee natives.

In the *Gazettes* of this time, which were among the province's earliest sources of historical data, we find that the mercantile business in 1735 centered in Elliott and Broad streets and on the Bay.

Elliott Street later obtained prominence as the seat of the wholesale houses and banking institutions—in great part because of its leading to one of the first public landings in the town — a space on each side of the old Court of Guard. The residences were chiefly on Broad, Church, and Tradd streets. The last was named for the first white child born in South Carolina.

At the time of the theatrical excitement in Charles-Town during the building of the first Play-House the principal street running through its whole length was the present Church Street; the end of this street opening upon White Point.

One of the earliest Acts of the Assembly took measures "to drive the class of divers careless persons who frequented Church Street to work instead of allowing them to congregate on the street corners or to hang around the Punch Houses." Many of them, no doubt, regaled themselves too frequently at the "Sign of the Two Brewers" in Church Street over against Capt. Brewton's, or spent too much time at "The Pig and Whistle" on Tradd Street.

Elliott's Wharf always presented a gay spectacle, and Negroes in their picturesque garb of the day worked among the boats, singing in their plaintive minor

chords words intelligible to few save themselves—a custom that still prevails.

At anchor in the harbor lay sloops and schooners, some of which brought in the actors, bearing such euphonious names as *World-A-New, Charming Betty, Sweet Nelly, Peace and Plenty, The Happy Couple,* and *The Lark,* "vessels entered inwards", as the old papers stated.[1] From three to five of His Majesty's vessels were lying out in the stream and the provincial Scout Boat was also in requisition to guard the important water passage leading to St. Augustine.

The Court-Room, where the first strolling company had presented its plays the year before, opening with Otway's "Orphan", looked out upon these scenes; and the activity and bustle coincident with the uprearing of the "Dock-Street Theatre" were in close proximity.

Although the old publications continued through force of habit to call this street "Dock", its name was in reality changed by Act of Assembly April 9, 1734. Governor Robert Johnson affixed his signature to this document, which enacted that the street "should forever thereafter be called and known by the name of Queen Street; and that it should run from the north-east corner of the dwelling of Mr. Clapp, nigh the State House, four chain and eight links."

The original history of these old localities and buildings has been so lost sight of that, after laborious research to bring them to light, it seems best to mention them somewhat at length.

The Charles-Town map of 1739 marks the site of the theatre on the south side of Queen a little west of

1 "Charleston in the Olden Times," *The Mercury,* May 9, 1868.

Church Street, on the lot of land occupied in later years by the once famous Planters' Hotel, within less than a hundred yards of the Huguenot and St. Philip's churches, and the School was "over against the Play-House." Thus as close neighbors in Charles-Town were Religion, Education, and Diversion, which seemed to her people a natural sequence of a normal human being's needs.

The owners of the Charles-Town Theatre chose a fair site, and one that for many years was associated with happiness and gaiety. The second theatre was built nearby, and the Planters' Hotel occupied the rear portion of the theatre lot. This was the sojourning place of the planters and their families, who left their country estates at certain times of the year, just as they did in the Mother Country, and came into town for the winter social season and for Race Week in the spring. The Carolina planters were the dominant class socially and politically, and "the gentlemen seated in the country" commanded respect from all, and lived in a very "noble, genteel style."

Before the days of railroads, the stage coaches for Savannah, Augusta, and the West started from this hotel. Stages holding nine passengers inside made tri-weekly trips. This particular spot was always lively, and in days of yore was known as "the Jolly Corner", where the gentlemen of the old régime met to discuss horses, politics, and the events of the times.

The South Carolina *Gazettes* for May 3, 10, and 17, 1734-5, sent forth this call: "All gentlemen that are disposed to encourage the exhibiting of Plays next winter may see the subscription list at Mr. Shepheard's,

and any persons that are desirous of having a share in the Performance thereof, upon application to Mr. Shepheard, shall receive a satisfactory Answer."

Mr. Shepheard's duty of passing upon the native "supers" might give him, in a way, the distinction of being Charles-Town's first theatrical advance agent, and his tavern served as the first box-office, and he no doubt had to interview a number of gleeful persons glad to be included in the fun in any guise.

The name of the manager of the first theatre has been obtained through an advertisement of the second. He was William Holliday, an Englishman, who kept one of the taverns and who remained in Charles-Town until the Revolutionary war-clouds frightened him home.

His farewell card was in the South Carolina *Gazette* of April 12, 1773:

"William Holliday, intending to depart this Province in June next . . . acknowledges that the very extraordinary countenance and Favours he has received from the Gentlemen of this Province, individually as well as in Societies, have been so many and so often repeated that he begs hereby to be permitted to return them his most gracious Thanks."

The list of subscribers to this first theatre project will probably never come to light, but that a sufficient number of signatures was procured is attested by the fact that the theatre was built.

From the very first performances of the strolling players, Virginia and Carolina had accorded them a welcome. The Dutch of New York, the Quakers of Philadelphia, and the Puritans of Boston strenuously

opposed their earliest representations; but the English and French in Charles-Town hailed the Play with delight. The first performances in Philadelphia were given in Plumstead's store, those in New York in Rip van Dam's "convenient room", but in Charles-Town the Court-Room was cleared for them, so that the Stage here has always been literally under the wing of the law.

"Papers should not be used for such trivial matters as the merits or demerits of plays," said an early author, and as the advent of the great Garrick upon the London stage was heralded only by a couple of lines in the most obscure corner of the paper, it is not a matter of surprise that no description has been found of the "Dock-Street Theatre" nor of the company that filled its first engagement; but the leading lady, *Monimia* in the "Orphan," returned to delight again her friends of the Court-Room performances, and most likely the same men and women who had taken prominent roles with her in the season of 1734-5 came, too, all of them having probably been engaged for the opening of the house.

The early papers gave little heed to the comings and goings of strolling actors, but Charles-Town's first temporary stage drew forth sufficient enthusiasm from townspeople to produce prologues and epilogues which were published in the pages of the *Gazettes,* and it seems unaccountable that some slight mention was not made of the players themselves.

The first New York theatre opened December 6, 1732, with Farquhar's comedy "The Recruiting Officer."[1]

[1] *New England and Boston Gazette,* January 1, 1733.

Is it not natural to surmise that the same company might have decided to try its fortunes in another American seaport that was as well known in England as Charles-Town was, and that these same strollers came here and played in the Court-Room, 1734-5, and inspired the citizens to build for their reception a theatre which opened a year later?

The erection of a Play-House in a town is always an event of importance, and the mind can visualize the crowds of interested people who visited the scene as the Thespian temple neared completion. And with what delight and satisfaction its promoters and builders viewed the finishing touches! It was most likely a simple and unadorned temple of the Muses, but suited to the purposes for which it was built, and what it lacked in finish was no doubt cheerfully supplied by the vivid imaginations of the eager audiences.

The South Carolina *Gazette* of January 24, 1735-6, announced:

"On Thursday, February 12, will be opened the New Theatre in Dock street in which will be perform'd 'The Recruiting Officer'. Tickets for the pitt and boxes will be delivered at Mr. Charles Shepheard's on Thursday the 5th February. Boxes 30s., pitt 20s., and tickets for the gallery 15s., which will be delivered at the theatre the day of playing.

"N. B. the doors will be opened all the afternoon. The Subscribers are desired to send to the stage door in the forenoon to bespeak places, otherwise it will be too late."

That the first line forming at the stage door was a long one, a happily excited and voluble one, there is

no doubt, as there is none about the success of the first theatre's first performance, and it was upon this occasion that was spoken the *first American Epilogue* signed by its author.

This was later printed in *The Gentleman's Magazine,* London, Vol. VI (1736) p. 288. Its author was an Associate-Justice of the Province of South Carolina, and was afterward in the Assembly. He married, as is shown by a record in the Mesne Conveyance office, the daughter of Col. Miles Brewton, who in 1736 "conveyed" a house in Church Street "for love and affection to daughter Dale, wife of Dr. Thomas Dale."

The plot, witticisms, and coarse gaiety of Farquhar's comedy called forth an Epilogue in like vein, and, while Charles-Town takes some pride in having presented the first native Prologues and Epilogues to American audiences, more elegance of diction and propriety of speech in this production over its author's signature would have redounded more to her credit.

Grossness of language is largely a matter of time and place, and if the plays in London at this period were "so bold and so bad that ladies needed masks to conceal their blushes," it at least did not have the effect of keeping them at home, any more than the old Roman law which made it ground for divorce if a wife went to the theatre without her husband's consent.

Manners theatrical had not improved much for three-quarters of a century, for in 1663 Pepys notes in his Diary that ladies at the Play put on vizards which hid the whole face and had become a great fashion . . . and "So to the Exchange to buy a Vizard for my wife." Not being furnished with vizards, we have done the

best we could in omitting seven lines from the following:

"Epilogue to 'The Recruiting Officer', written by Thomas Dale, M. D., and spoken by *Silvia* in Man's Cloas, at the Opening of the New Theatre in Charles-Town in South Carolina, in 1734:[1]

In truth, dear ladies! 'tis a curious matter,
To prove Tiresias-like a double nature;
To bid farewell to petticoats and stitching,
And, wearing breeches, try their force bewitching;
From belle to belle with janty air to rove,
Play idle tricks, and make unmeaning love;
With scandal and quadrille address the dames;
And strut the fair ones into wanton flames. . . .
* * * * * * * * *
Thus far the bard; but sure the stupid rogue
Ne'er wrote before or ne'er wrote epilogue;
For young performers no excuse to frame!
To your indulgence lay no artful claim!
I'll beg myself then: Pray forgive our fright;
Think, ladies, on the fears of a first-night;
Kindly accept our faint, tho, willing, toils;
Withdraw not from us your accustom'd smiles;
Nor mark how ill I personate the rake;
But spare *Jack Willful* for *Monimia's* sake.

The Theatrical notice for February 21, 1735-6, reads: "At the New Theatre in Queen street will be acted on Monday next, a Tragedy called 'The Orphan, or the Unhappy Marriage'"; this old favorite was now to be performed for the people on a real stage of their own, and it held their affection for many years.

The next announcement for the Charles-Town stage, March 2, was quite an imposing one:

"By desire of the officers of the Troop and Foot Companies, at the New Theatre, Queen street, will be acted on Tuesday a comedy called 'The Recruiting Officer' and several Entertainments as will be express'd in the Great Bills."

[1] The date should have been 1736.

Once a week seems to have been the rule for the plays, and the next piece, George Lillo's famous "London Merchant, or the History of George Barnwell", was acted March 9. On the 16th it was repeated with the addition of a musical piece "The Devil to Pay, or The Wives Metamorphosed" — Coffey's celebrated work which he had adapted from Jevon's "Devil of a Wife". The comedy had not been successful, but when arranged as a farce, with songs by Cibber and others introduced, it was performed to crowded houses.

This season seems to have closed with "The Orphan" and the same ballad-opera on March 23, 1735-6. This was the second musical farce performed in America, and Charles-Town introduced both.

The *Gazette* of May 22-29, 1735-6, published the following lines:

"ON THE SALE OF THE NEW THEATRE.

How cruel fortune and how fickle too
To crop the method made for making you!
Changes tho' common, yet when great they prove
Make Men distrust the care of mighty Jove;
Half made in thought (though not in fact) we find
You bought and sold, but left poor "H" behind.
P. S. Since so it is, ne'er mind the silly trick,
The Fair will please when Pierrot makes you sick."

To what these dark sayings alluded none can tell; who sold and who bought is a mystery. "H" may have stood for "Holliday", as an announcement of the second theatre gives the only inkling of the name of the proprietor of the first, when it indicates the location of the second as "near where that of Messrs. Holliday and comp. formerly stood."

But harmony must have been restored, and if the property changed hands the good-will must have been

sold with it; and if there was a new proprietor he does not seem to have made any changes, and the fall season opened the house with the presentation of "Addison's Cato" with a Prologue by Mr. Pope, Thursday November 11. . . .

"N. B. If any Persons are possess'd of last Year's Tickets they are desired to send them in to be chang'd for new ones."

So evidently the disagreement had blown over or the exchange would not have been allowed.

November 18, "Cato" was again presented. It was beyond a doubt some of these performances that stirred the ambition of one of the literary young Carolinians who mounted Pegasus and achieved an Epilogue of his own to Mr. Addison's great work, and a much more thoughtful and commendable production than that of Dr. Dale's. The modest author had probably stuffed it away in the drawer of the secretary and it had some years later been rescued from oblivion by a fond parent and brought to the notice of the editor of the Charles-Town paper. The correspondence and Epilogue are given just as they appeared:

THE SOUTH CAROLINA GAZETTE.

Monday, September 5th, 1743. (Number 493)

Mr. Timothy,
Sir:

The following was wrote by a young Man, then about 17 years of age, for his own Amusement; as it never was in Print, perhaps the inserting it in your next will be agreeable to some of your readers, and will be taken as a favor, by Sir,

Your very humble Servant
S———— C————

AN EPILOGUE TO THE TRAGEDY OF "CATO."

Well Sirs, what think you now of Cato's fate?
Pray was his Exit pitiful, or great?

Caesar and he had quite a different Notion;
Cato loved Rome, but Caesar loved Promotion;
But now were I the Question to decide
Cato methinks had better lived than died;
He might have told the Emperor his own,
And by superior Virtue awed the Throne:
Besides who knows what Time and Application,
Might have effected towards a Restoration?
Britain, at least has seen as strange a Thing,
The Rump's deposed, to raise her lawful King;
So Vice Versa, Rome's old Genius might
Have humbled Caesar, and usurp'd her Right:
But Oh! her Generals and her Consuls were no more
And Caesar triumphed with a Conqueror's Power:
Hence was the Patriot's Breast with Glory fired,
And Liberty, and he at once expired;
Bankrupts and Lovers may have sometimes tried
The Experiment for Ease and poorly died;
But for one's Country thus to fall a Pinking,
Is not so much the modern way of thinking.
But jests apart, what Cato dared to do,
Was brave, nay generous, in a Heathen's view,
His last, his dying Sentiments may tell
How well he reason'd and how greatly fell.
Our better Light forbids the impious Crime,
And bids us wait high Heaven's appointed Time;
And not rashly dare to andidate his Will,
Whose royal Mandate runs, Thou shalt not kill.
We are satisfied, That he who meekly bears the ills of Life,
Patient to Sufferings, and averse to Strife;
Who with firm Hope and Trust on Heaven relies,
Nor to unlawful Means for Succor flyes;
Tho' still by Envy, Vice, or Faction tost,
Shall find his Hope and Patience were not lost.

[Editor's Note]: Willing to oblige S. C. I have inserted the above lines; but desire that when that Gentleman shall send any more, he will please to correct them.

December 1, 1736, "The Recruiting Officer," with Colley Cibber's "Flora, or Hob in the Well", held the boards, and December 17, there was a repetition of "Cato, with Entertainments of Dancing."

In January's issue of 8-15, 1737, appears an advertisement for January 11 of "The Recruiting Officer with Prologue, Epilogue, etc". In a later January paper appeared this: "A Ball at the Play-House on Queen

Street on the 3rd of February next to begin at 6 o'clock."

Three months seem to have elapsed between performances, when the *Gazette* of May 21, 1737, announced: "At the request of the ancient and honorable Society of Free and Accepted Masons, at the Theatre in Queen Street on Thursday next, the 26th Instant, will be perform'd a Comedy called 'The Recruiting Officer' with a Prologue and Epilogue and Song suitable to the Occasion, to which will be added a new Dance, called 'Harlequin and the Clown,' and 'The Song of Mad Tom' in proper Habiliments, by a Person that never yet appear'd upon the Stage."

The unusually large number of attractions offered this night indicated that the actors were making a supreme effort to honor the occasion of appearing before "the ancient and honorable" in a body.

A writer in the *Sunday News* December 15, 1895, signing "G. H. Y. S.", says that "Mad Tom's" song must have been taken from "King Lear" and, if so, sustains Charleston's claim to the first recorded instance of the production of anything Shakespearean on this continent.

This performance was given the lengthiest notice by the *Gazette* that had yet appeared concerning things dramatic, and follows in full:

Charles-Town, May 28.

On Thursday Night last "the Recruiting Officer" was acted for the Entertainment of the ancient and honourable Society of Free and Accepted Masons, who came to the Play-house about 7 o'clock in the usual Manner, and made a very decent and solemn Appearance; there was a fuller house on this Occasion than ever had been known in this Place before. A proper Prologue and Epilogue were spoke, and the entered Apprentices and Masters' Songs sung upon the Stage, which were joined in Chorus by the Masons in the Pit,

to the Satisfaction and Entertainment of the whole Audience. After the Play the Masons return'd to the Lodge at Mr. Shepheard's in the same order observed in coming to the Play-House.

So far as research has led, this was the first dramatic criticism given of an American performance, and although much more is said of the audience than of the performance — and the "very decent and solemn Appearance of the Free and Accepted Masons" the only point stressed — it was a definite movement in the direction of dramatic criticism. This was *twenty-three years before* the Critique in the *Maryland Gazette* concerning the opening of the theatre in Annapolis with Douglass' Company in "The Orphan", which is mentioned in Seilhamer's "History of the American Theatre" as being the first article in an American newspaper in the nature of dramatic criticism.

The above authority also claims that "the files of the *Virginia Gazette* of 1768 are the earliest containing theatrical advertisements."

In the light of those quoted, beginning February 8, 1734-5, *thirty-four years earlier,* it is with pleasure that these laurels are removed from the brow of Virginia, where they have rested so long, and added to Carolina's quite respectable collection.

Charles-Town's first theatre opened on February 12, 1735-6, with "The Recruiting Officer" and closed its doors with the same play, May 26, 1737.

No comment as to the disappearance of the players seems to have been made by their only historians, the papers of the time; but the *Gazettes* have numerous later advertisements of Consorts and Balls which were given in the Play-House.

The span of life of the originally-chronicled "Dock-

Street Theatre" was brief, but it illumines a chapter in the city's history, and it blazed the way for those to come after.

PERFORMANCES IN CHARLES-TOWN'S FIRST THEATRE.

1736

Feb. 12 — The Recruiting Officer, with Prologue by Dr. Thomas Dale .....Farquhar
Feb. 23 — The Orphan .....Otway
Mar. 2 — The Recruiting Officer, with "Several Entertainments," etc.
Mar. 9 — The London Merchant or the History of George Barnwell .....Lillo
Mar. 16 — George Barnwell and The Ballad-Opera, Devil to Pay. [The Second Musical Play given in America.]
Mar. 23 — The Orphan and The Devil to Pay
Nov. 11 — Cato, with a Prologue by Mr Pope .....Addison
Nov. 18 — Cato
Dec. 1 — The Recruiting Officer, with Flora, or Hob in the Well .....Cibber
Dec. 17 — Cato, with Entertainments of Dancing

1737

Jan. 11 — The Recruiting Officer, with Prologue and Epilogue
May 21 — The Recruiting Officer, with Prologue, Epilogue, Song and Dance

CHAPTER III

Colonial Plays and Players in Charles-Town's Second and Third Theatres 1754—1763-4—1766.

The American Début of Miss Cheer, 1764.
First American Appearance of Miss Wainwright and Miss Hallam, 1766
First American Appearance of Mr. Woolls and Mr. Wall, 1766
First American Presentations of
"The Orphan of China:"
"A Wonder! A Woman Keeps a Secret!"
"The School for Lovers," and
"The Oracle."

CHAPTER III

At the time of the opening of Charles-Town's second theatre one of her Royal Governors was at Carolina's helm of state, and the military pomp and ceremony attendant upon the arrival in the province of His Excellency James Glen, Governor, Commander-in-Chief, Vice-Admiral, etc., had been glowingly set forth by the South Carolina *Gazette* which evidently took great pride in heralding so august a personage.

It gloried in the fine appearance of the Charles-Town Regiment drawn up under arms in two long lines. "They have a well disciplined Militia," wrote back one of the English Surveyors, John Lawson, "their Officers both Infantry and Cavalry generally appear in scarlet Mountings and as rich as in most Regiments belonging to the Crown, which shows the Richness and Grandness of the colony."

The salutes from the various batteries as the vessel came up the harbor smote their ears with pleasure. "His Excellency, upon landing, was attended by the Honorable the Commons House and many Officers and Gentlemen of Distinction, and conducted — the sword of state borne before — to Granville's Bastion, where the Royal Commission was published in due form followed by three *whiurras*, a discharge of cannon at all the Bastions, and a general volley of the Regiment."

"His Excellency, attended again in the same manner, walked to Shepheard's Tavern where a handsome entertainment was provided for him, and a numerous company concluded this day with joy, the house being handsomely illuminated."

Shepheard's Tavern, one of the principal public houses of the town, played an important part in the development of the Stage in Charles-Town, and shared the honors with "that old and noted Tavern, Marshal's on the Bay," and the Exchange Coffee House, at Alexander Chisolm's on the Bay, "where gentlemen will have the Entertainment and Attendance usual in Coffee Houses abroad."

Shepheard's Tavern changed proprietors and became a little later Dillon's on "the Corner" (of Church and Broad) in the very centre of the little walled town, whence flowed arteries of interest to the heart of every citizen from this main source, and everything of any importance in the community was well threshed out on this spot by the "Corner Club."

In 1740 occurred the first great devastation by fire in the annals of Carolina. From Broad Street where the fire started, to Granville's Bastion on the water front, almost every house in Charles-Town was at one time in flames.

The British Parliament voted twenty thousand pounds sterling to be distributed among the sufferers. Very likely the first theatre was destroyed at this time, and another was built for the reception of the actors who came in 1754.

Lewis Hallam's Company, the first one organized for America, coming over in 1752, played in Williamsburg and New York, and opened in Philadelphia, April 15, 1754, with "The Fair Penitent," played there through June, and came to Charles-Town to open her second theatre with the same piece on October 7.

The South Carolina *Gazette* of October 3d announced:

At the New Theatre
On Monday next,
Will be Performed
(By a Company of Comedians from London)
A Tragedy
called
"The Fair Penitent."

Tickets may be had of Mr. John Remington and at the Printer's. Price: Stage Box 50sh.
Front and Side Boxes, 40sh. Pitt, 30sh. and Gallery 20sh.

The *Gazette's* dramatic reporter furnishes this:

"Last Monday evening the New Theatre in this Town was opened when a Company of Comedians perform'd the Tragedy called 'The Fair Penitent' much to the satisfaction of the Audience."

It was as the gallant gay *Lothario* that David Garrick first set English audiences wild, in Rowe's immensely popular "Fair Penitent."

The next two bills, published October 10, follow:

At the New Theatre
On Thursday evening next
Will be Presented
(By a Company of Comedians from London)
A Comedy, called
"A Bold Stroke for a Wife."

To which will be added, a Farce, called "The Mock Doctor, or Dumb Lady Cur'd."

Tickets may be had of Mr. John Remington, and at the Printer's office. Stage Box 50sh
Front and Side Boxes, 40sh. Pitt, 30sh. and Gallery 20sh."

Oct. 17th:

At the New Theatre
On Thursday evening next,
Will be Presented
(By a Company from London,)
A Tragedy called "The
Orphan
or
The Unhappy Marriage."

(Prices as above).

The dramatic reporter was probably busier enjoying himself at the play than strictly attending to business, for, as the plays were given once a week, there were many omissions in the papers, the record of which would have been lost to posterity save for the happy chance of the preservation of a Diary, which valuable manuscript has, through the courtesy of the South Carolina Historical Society, filled in many gaps, but even with this help the list is still imperfect.

The person who rendered this assistance was Mrs. Gabriel Manigault. née Ann Ashby, who kept this Journal from 1754 to 1781. Her husband was the most successful merchant during the Colonial period of Carolina. He was the son of Judith Manigault, one of Charles-Town's early Huguenots. In 1753 he advanced 3,500 pounds to the use of the French Protestants coming to settle in Carolina, and during the Revolutionary War he made a loan to South Carolina of $220,000. Mr. Manigault was Treasurer of the Province and for some time a Representative in the Commons House.

Mrs. Manigault seems usually to have selected just one important episode of each day to note. The following, taken at random, shows the style of her *Journal* and gives certain Colonial items of interest:

1754:

May 28 — To see a Wire-Dancer at Gordon's.
July 17 — Mr. M. went to Silk Hope
[The country seat of Gov. Sir Nathaniel Johnson]
Nov. 11 — Went to a Ball
Nov. 25 — Went to the Play of George Barnwell
Dec. 1 — My son arrived from England—
[Peter Manigault — later Speaker of the House]
Dec. 10 — Miss Newman went with me to the Assembly
Dec. 27 — Went to the Play

PLANTERS' HOTEL

1755:
Jan. 7 — To the Assembly
Jan. 15 — The Council at Dinner
Jan. 21 — To the Assembly
Jan. 27 — I went to the Play
Feb. 4 — Went to hear a Quaker Preacher
Feb. 28 — I went to hear Mr. Whitefield
Nov. 10 — I went to a Ball

1756:
Feb. 26 — A Horse Race and Assembly
Dec. 12 — The Governor drank Tea with us
Apr. 14 — Sat again for my picture [by Theus]

1768:
Apr. 27 — A Fire at the Orange Garden

1770:
June 6 — Peter Timothy died [Ed. S. C. *Gazette*]
July 5 — Mr. Pitt's Statue raised.

In 1763-4-5, she mentions a long list of plays by name.

Besides the three play-bills given, the fall season of October, November, and December, 1754, included: November 6—"Cato;" November 13—"The Recruiting Officer," with the Farce of "The King and the Miller;" November 25—"George Barnwell;" and December 27 — "The Distressed Mother".

Of this last play, a news item in the *Gazette* mentions it as the crowning event of a very full day of the Ancient and Honorable Society of Free and Accepted Masons. They had that morning at nine o'clock met and formed the Grand Lodge of Masons of South Carolina, of upward of a hundred members:

> All the Brethren being properly cloathed with the Ensigns of their Order and their Flag carried before them marched in procession to Church, where an excellent sermon was preach'd. ..... After Divine Service they returned in Procession to Mr. Gordon's Tavern where a genteel Entertainment was provided for the Company. Dinner over, the usual Toasts were drank, etc.....

The *Gazette* says of the Play: "The Masons celebrated St. John's Day, and in the evening went to the New Theatre where the Tragedy called "The Distressed

Mother" was given with Prologue and Epilogue and Masons' Songs between."

Most authorities state that Lewis Hallam, Sr., retired with his family to Jamaica in 1754; but, as Mrs. Manigault writes in her *Journal* for January 27, 1755, "I went to the Play," it is possible that he preceded the family, or more probable that they all went together soon after this performance. Mr. Hallam died a short while after reaching Jamaica.

Every writer on the subject of the early American Stage should offer a flower of appreciation to the memory of Lewis Hallam, this pioneer manager who brought to this country the best and purest plays of the English dramatists of the time. Seilhamer says his list comprised only "the masterpieces of the Masters."

The twenty-four full pieces and eleven after-pieces of his repertoire show what earnestness and close application were required of his company.

A year or two after his death his widow married David Douglass, who organized a theatrical company in Jamaica in 1758 for another American campaign with Mrs. Douglass as leading lady, Mrs. Harman, (grand daughter of Colley Cibber) next in importance to Mrs. Douglass, and young Lewis Hallam, then in his twentieth year, to whom was allotted all the tragedy rôles except the heaviest.

"After his retirement from New York in 1762, Mr. David Douglass did not venture upon the continent again until 1766 when he built the Southwark Theatre," says Seilhamer, but this gentleman did not know what was happening in Carolina.

SECOND AND THIRD THEATRE

The *Gazette* of November 5, 1763, states:

A Company of Comedians arrived here last Monday from Virginia who are called the American Company and were formerly under the direction of Mr. Lewis Hallam, till his death. Amongst the principal performers we hear are Mr. David Douglass (the present Manager, married to Mrs. Hallam,) Mr. Lewis Hallam, Jr., Mr. Quelst, Mrs. Douglass, Mrs. Harman, etc. They come warmly recommended from the Northern colonies where they have performed several years with great applause, and in their private capacities acquired the best of characters. A Theater is already contracted for, 75 feet by 35, to be erected near where that of Messrs. Holliday and Comp. formerly stood and intended to be opened the 5th of December next."

David Douglass was a man of character and ability and a worthy successor of Lewis Hallam, and he was the master of the American Stage until the Revolutionary War necessitated his retirement.

Mr. Douglass was getting into the habit of building playhouses to receive his companies. After building the Chapel or Beekman-Street Theatre in New York, which opened on the 19th of November, 1761, and closed the last of April, 1762, it is almost beyond peradventure that he came to Charles-Town and built this third theatre, 75 ft. by 35 ft., on Queen Street near the site of the old theatre, for the reception of the American Company.

Seilhamer says of the Southwark Theatre opened on the 21st of November, 1766, speaking of Douglass' Company — "It was on this occasion that the company was first called "The American Company."[1]

The South Carolina *Gazette* bears witness that the name was used three years earlier in Charles-Town and came evidently first into use at the Virginia performances preceding the Charles-Town engagement.

The following plays of the Douglass Company for

1 "History of the American Theatre" (1749-1774) p. 153.

the season of 1763-4 are recorded either in the *Gazettes* or Mrs. Manigault's Journal.

1763:
Dec. 14 — The Suspicious Husband and Lethe
Dec. 16 — The Gamester and Wives Metamorphosed
Dec. 19 — The Provoked Husband and Damon and Phillida
Dec. 22 — The Mourning Bride

1764:
Jan. 13 — Douglas
Feb. 3 — George Barnwell
Feb. 13 — The Conscious Lovers
Feb. 24 — Jane Shore
Feb. 27 — Love for Love
Mar. 17 — The Jealous Wife
Mar. 26 — The Orphan of China and the Anatomist (Benefit of Mr. Morris)
Mar. 29 — Theodosius
Apr. 9 — The Mourning Bride
Apr. 12 — Romeo and Juliet
Apr. 25 — A Wonder! A Woman Keeps a Secret and a Farce (Benefit of Mrs. Crane and Mr. Barry)
May 10 — King Lear

As performances were given three times a week, the names of many plays are missing from this list, but the small weekly papers probably found it impossible to include every bill in their columns.

But Mr. Douglass was giving his audiences the very highest grade English dramas, the same that were being played in the London Theatres.

SOUTH CAROLINA GAZETTE, MARCH 10-17—1764:

By Permission of His Excellency
For the Benefit of Mr. Morris
On Monday the 26th of March,
Will be Performed,
At the New Theatre in Queen Street
By the American Company of Comedians
A Tragedy called "The
Orphan of China"

Timurkan, ...Mr. Allyn
Octar, ...Mr. Emmet
Zamti, ...Mr. Douglass
Etan, ...Mr. Hallam
Hamet, ...Mr. A. Hallam
Morat, ...Mr. Morris
Orasming, ...Mr. Furell
Zimventi, ...Mr. Barry
Mirvan, ...Mr. Morris

Mandare by Mrs. Douglass

The Prologue to be spoken by Mr. Hallam
and the Epilogue by Mrs. Douglass
After the Play, "The White Cliffs of Albion"
Sung by Mr. Furell
To which will be added a Farce called "The
Anatomist
or the
Sham Doctor"

Old Gerrald, ...Mr. Morris
Young Gerrald, ...Mr. Douglass
Mons. Le Med'cine, ...Mr. Allyn
Martin, ...Mr. A. Hallam
Crispin, ...Mr. Hallam
Simon, ...Mr. Furell
Doctor's Wife, ...Mrs. Crane
Angelica, ...Mrs. Morris
Beatrice, ...Mrs. Douglass
Waiting Woman, ...Mrs. Allyn

After the Farce, "The Padlock of the Mind," sung
by Mr. Barry
And a Song called The Broom by
Mrs. Morris.

To begin exactly at Half past Six o'clock.
Tickets, without which no Person can be
admitted, to be had of Mr. Cannon, of whom
Places for the Boxes may be taken.
Boxes, 40s. Pitt, 30s., Gallery, 20s.

A month later appeared this bill:

By Permission of His Excellency
For the Benefit of Mrs. Crane and Mr. Barry
(Being the last Benefit)
On Wednesday the 25th of April
will be presented
By the American Company of Comedians
At the New Theatre in Queen Street,
A Comedy, called

"A WONDER!
A WOMAN KEEPS A SECRET."

Don Felix, ...Mr. Hallam
Don Lopez, ...Mr. Morris
Frederick, ...Mr. H. Hallam
Dom Pedro, ...Mr. Emmet
Col. Blinker, ...Mr. Furell
Gibby, ...Mr. Barry
Lissards, ...Mr. Allyn
Violante, ...Miss Cheer
Isabella, ...Mrs. Crane
Flora, ...Mrs. Norris
Iris, ...Mrs. Harman

To conclude with a Dance by the Characters.
Between the Play and the Farce, "The Heavy Hours"
Sung by Miss Cheer
To which will be added a Farce, etc., etc.
As expressed in the Bills of the Day,
To begin precisely at Seven o'clock.
Tickets, without which no Person can be admitted,
to be had of Mr. Cannon, of whom places for the
Boxes may be taken.
Boxes, 40s. Pit, 30s. Gallery. 20s.

"A Wonder! A Woman Keeps a Secret" was first brought out at the Theatre Royal, London, and its author, Mrs. Centlivre, added much to her popularity as a playwright through this admirable comedy of intrigue.

This play bill shows for the first time the name of Miss Cheer, who not only acted the part of *Violante* in the "Wonder," but had the song, "The Heavy Hours," between the Comedy and the farce.

A number of the plays of this and the succeeding Charles-Town seasons had their first-nights in this country on her boards, viz: "The Orphan of China;" "A Wonder! A Woman Keeps a Secret;" "Love in a Village;" "The Way to Keep Him;" "The School for Lovers;" and Mrs. Cibber's translation from the French, "The Oracle."

Seilhamer's "History of the American Theatre" (1749-1774) pages 204-5, says:

"All the historians unite in saying that Miss Cheer made her début December 7th, 1767, at the John Street Theatre, New York, as *Miss Sullen* in 'The Beaux' Stratagem.' This error is due to Dunlap, from whom it has been copied by all his successors. . . . . It must be conceded that it was worth the historian's while to ascertain the fact that Miss Cheer, the second leading lady of prominence on the American stage, made her

first appearance in this country at the Southwark Theatre, November 21st, 1766, as *Catherine* in 'Catherine and Petruchio' more than a year before the John Street Theatre house was opened."

Now comes the Charles-Town announcement to prove that Seilhamer, as well as Dunlap, was uninformed as to Miss Cheer's real American début. This lady, "already an actress of established reputation," made her first bow to the colonists as *Violante* in the first American production of Mrs. Centlivre's comedy, "A Wonder! A Woman Keeps A Secret," at the New Theatre in Queen Street, Charles-Town, S. C., April 25, 1764, more than two years and a half before the opening of the Southwark.

None of the dramatic authorities consulted seems to have known of these 1763-4 Charles-Town performances. Seilhamer states that, after his retirement from New York in 1762, Douglass left America and did not return till 1766, when he built the Southwark Theatre in Philadelphia; and "The Americana" says: "In November, 1765, Douglass appeared in Charles-Town and remained there till the following April." His "leaving the continent" was coming down to Charles-Town in 1763, and probably remaining, or making his headquarters there until after the Charles-Town season of 1766.

The members of the company who performed during the season of 1763-4 were Mr. and Mrs. David Douglass, Mr. and Mrs. Allyn, Mr. and Mrs. Morris, Mrs. Harman, Mrs. Crane, Miss Cheer, and Messrs. Emmet, Lewis and Adam Hallam, Furell, and Barry.

The public amusements of Charlestonians for the

year 1765, as shown by the *Gazettes* and Mrs. Manigault's *Journal,* begin with that lady's chronicle of February 14, "I went to see Experiments in Electricity."

Then follow concerts at the Orange Gardens "for the entertainment of all lovers of harmony"—Concerts of the St. Cecilia Society—Balls and Assemblies.

On October 5 a notice appears that the Concert which was to have taken place in the Orange Gardens is to be held in the Theatre on Queen Street.

The musical programme is given below to show the orchestral abilities of the local musicians, in case their services were required for the operas brought out in Charles-Town.

ACT I

French Horn Concerto
2d. Concerto of Stanley
Solo on the Violoncello
5th Concerto of Stanley
Bassoon Concerto
Song
Overture in Scipio

ACT II

French Horn Overture
Concerto on the Harpsichord
Trio
Bassoon Concerto
Song
French Horn Concerto of Hasse

The change of place from the Gardens to the Theatre was probably on account of the annoyance mentioned in a note after one of the concert advertisements for a previous musical entertainment. "N. B. It is hoped no person will be so indiscreet as to attempt climbing over the fence to the annoyance of the subscribers," etc.

A highly relished theatrical *bon bouche* occurs in the advertisement of the organist of St. Philip's Church:

PETER VALTON'S CONCERT

Will be on Wednesday the 13th of November next at the Theatre in Queen Street. Besides a variety of Concertos, Overtures, Solos, etc., there will be two songs sung by Miss Wainwright and two by Miss Hallam, who never appeared in Public. Likewise a Concerto on the Harpsichord. Subscriptions taken in and Tickets delivered by Peter Valton at two dollars each. One Ticket will admit two Ladies and one Gentleman. None but subscribers will be admitted.

This was the musical début of the two young girls, whose first appearance on the stage took place behind the Charles-Town footlights early in the season of 1766.

During the opening season of the Southwark Theatre, first appearances there were claimed by Seilhamer for not only Miss Cheer but for Miss Wainwright, Miss Hallam, and Mr. Woolls as the *greatest acquisitions* to the Douglass Company of 1766. "Miss Cheer and Miss Wainwright," he says, "were probably engaged in the West Indies. Mr. Woolls is a good actor and an excellent singer; he and Miss Wainwright were both pupils of the celebrated Dr. Arne."

Mr. Douglass recruited his new company in Charles-Town for the season of 1766 and played here from January through April, before going North to give his attention to the Southwark theatre.

Miss Cheer made her début as *Violante* in "The Wonder," April, 1764; Miss Wainwright and Miss Hallam their musical débuts here on November 13, 1765, and their first appearances on the stage in January, 1766, as did Mr. Woolls and Mr. Wall, each of them being given a benefit before the season closed.

Accrediting these important theatrical achievements to Philadelphia instead of Charles-Town, was through

ignorance of the dramatic activities of the South. Seilhamer, whose great work has been an inspiration to all who have followed him, simply lacked the theatrical information as to this section of country to do it full justice. His knowledge of Charles-Town's Theatre began with the season of 1773-4, to which he gives full measure of praise.

In the *Gazette's* issue of December 17, 1765, is this card:

THOMAS WALL
From the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane and
the Haymarket
London
Undertakes to teach Ladies and Gentlemen
to play upon the Guitar, etc.
Ladies and Gentlemen who please to honor him
with their commands, by sending to him at
Mrs. Creswell's in Broad Street, will
be immediately waited upon.

A similar notice for April 8, 1766, appears — "Thomas Wall — intending to stay some time in this town," etc., etc. It was this "Mr. Thomas Llewellyn Lechmere Wall," who, according to the "Americana," left the most important annals relating to the American stage, in a collection of play-bills covering forty years of the theatrical life of the actor. Mr. Wall's name as written above appears only in the "Americana;" it is elsewhere written simply "Thomas Wall."

There is only an imperfect record of the season of 1766. The little sheets of the time were filled with the wailings of the "United Voice of all His Majesty's free and loyal Subjects in America."

Peter Timothy put the South Carolina *Gazette* in mourning because of the arrival of stamps — and "Liberty, Property, and No Stamps" was the cry on

all sides; and the Theatre did not get its full share of attention, but the following plays were mentioned in the *Gazette* and Mrs. Manigault's *Journal*:

1766:

Jan. 17 — The Distressed Mother
Jan. 31 — Douglas
Feb. 10 — Love in a Village (First time acted in America)
Feb. 27 — The Constant Couple or a Trip to the Jubilee and The Mock Doctor (Benefit of Mrs. Osborne)
Mar. 6 — The Gamester and The Oracle (First time acted in America) — (Benefit of Mrs. Douglass)
Mar. 13 — Provoked Husband or a Journey to London and The Lying Valet (Benefit of Mr. Emmet)
Mar. 20 — The Way to Keep Him (Never acted in America) and The Brave Irishman (Benefit of Mr. Verling)
Apr. 3 — The School for Lovers (Never acted in America) The Oracle and an Ode set to music by a Gentleman of this Province (Benefit of Miss Hallam)
Apr. 16 — Cato and Miss in Her Teens (Benefit of the Poor) — [First notice of a performance for charity in Charles-Town].

The list of play-bills, showing the personnel of the troupe and the elaborate offerings of the day, with pertinent letters and advertisements following in the successive numbers of the weeklies, tell their own story:

SOUTH CAROLINA GAZETTE AND COUNTRY JOURNAL, FEB. 25, 1766:

For the Benefit of Mrs. Osborne
At the Theatre in Queen Street on Thursday
next, 27th February, will be presented
A Comedy, called
"The Constant Couple or
A Trip to the Jubilee."
Sir Harry Wildair by Mrs. Osborne.
"Hapless Lovers who sigh in vain", composed by
Dr. Arnold to be sung by Miss Wainwright,
At the End of the Second Act.
By particular desire after the Play a
Minuet by Mrs. Osborne and Miss Wainwright,
To which will be added a Farce, called
"The Mock Doctor,
or The Dumb Lady Cured."
The Mock Doctor by Mr. Douglass
Dorcas, with the Songs in Character by
Miss Wainwright.
At the End of the Farce, the Epilogue of

Bucks Have At Ye All to be spoke by
Mrs. Osborne.
N. B. Tickets to be had and Places for the Boxes taken
at Mrs. Cannon's next door to the Theatre and
of Mrs. Osborne at Mrs. Howe's behind the
Old Church."

SOUTH CAROLINA GAZETTE AND COUNTRY JOURNAL, MARCH 4, 1766:

"Mr. Printer,"

If the inclosed does not come too late for this day's Gazette, you will, by giving it a Place, greatly oblige,

Yours etc.,

A Subscriber.

Tuesday Morning:

I was at the Play last night and with infinite Pleasure heard "The Gamester" and "The Oracle" given out for Mrs. Douglass' Benefit; as that Lady has, during the two Seasons that she has performed here, given general Satisfaction to her Audiences, I congratulate her on the Choice of two Pieces that cannot fail, I think, to fill her House: Merit, of any Kind should be distinguished by the Publick; but more particularly that of a Performer on the Stage; as they exert their Talents for our Entertainment, it is but just we should shew our Sense of it, by rewarding them in Proportion to the Improvement, or Pleasure, we receive from them.

"The Gamester" was acted here last season, and if I am not mistaken to a very crowded Audience; I shall therefore say nothing more in favor of it, but inform those of your Readers, who were not present at the Representation, that the Scenes are in domestick Life; the characters strongly marked; the Passions exquisitely touched; the Catastrophe severely just, and the Moral .....; but the Words of the Author, in one line, will convey it to them;

"Want of Prudence is want of Virtue!"

"The Oracle" was translated from the French by Mrs. Cibber, and is perhaps the most delicate, sensible *Petite* Piece on the English Stage: the Sentiments are tender and the Language such as we should expect to hear from the Characters, Being of a Superiour Nature to us Mortals. I am much deceived, if Miss Hallam in *Cinthia*, which I presume is the character she will perform, does not discover a Greater force of Genius, than the Audiences hitherto, notwithstanding the applause she has received, have imagined her to possess.[1]

As my only Motive for giving you this Trouble is a Desire of doing Justice to Merit, I shall pay very little Regard to any Animadversions that may possibly be made, either on my Subject or my Stile.

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[1] This prophecy was fully verified. Miss Hallam developed into an actress of more than ordinary ability and personal charm. During her performances at Annapolis in 1771 the audiences went into rhapsodies over her; numerous odes were dedicated to her, and her portrait was painted as *Imogen* by Charles Wilson Peale. Never before had an American Actress created such a sensation.

Immediately beneath this is the advertisement:

By Permission of His Honour, the Lieutenant Governour,
For the Benefit of Mrs. Douglass,
At the Theatre in Queen Street on Thursday next being the 6th Instant, will be presented,
A Tragedy, Called
THE GAMESTER

Beverly, ...Mr. Verling
Stukely, ...Mr. Douglass
Lewson, ...Mr. Wall
Jarvis, ...Mr. Emmet
Charlotte, ...Mr. Osborne
Lucy, ...Miss Hallam and
Mrs. Beverly, ...Mrs. Douglass

The Prologue and Epilogue by Mr. and Mrs. Douglass.
After the Play, singing by Mr. Woolls,
To which will be added a Piece never acted in America, translated from the French, called
"The Oracle."
Cinthia, with a song incident to the Piece, by Miss Hallam.

Fairy Queen, ...Mrs. Douglass
Oberon, ...Mr. Wall

"The Statue's Dance" by Mrs. Osborne
N. B. Places in the Boxes and Tickets to be had of Mrs. Cannon and of Mrs. Douglass, at Mrs. Blamyer's, in Queen street.

Mar. 11, 1766:

For the Benefit of Mr. Emmet
A Comedy, Called
"The Provoked Husband or A Journey to London."
At the end of the Play a Hornpipe by Mrs. Osborne.
To which will be added a Comedy of Two Acts, Called "The Lying Valet."
After the Comedy, singing by Miss Wainwright.
Mr. Wooll's Benefit was postponed on account of the Weather till another Day, of which proper notice will be given.

Mar. 18, 1766:

For the Benefit of Mr. Verling
At the Theatre in Queen Street, on Thursday next, being the 20th Instant, will be presented
A Comedy never acted in America, called,
"The Way to Keep Him,"
To which will be added a Farce called
"The Brave Irishman."

After the Play, an Occasional Epilogue
written and to be spoken by
Mr. Verling in the Character of
A Master Mason.

The *Imperial Magazine,* 1761, gives an account of "The Way to Keep Him", which was played the year before in London with David Garrick as *Lovemore* and Mrs. Cibber as the *Widow Belmour,* and gives Mr. Garrick's song that was introduced into the play, from which two verses are quoted:

Ye fair married dames who so often deplore,
That a lover once bless'd is a lover no more;
Attend to my counsel nor blush to be taught
That prudence must cherish, what beauty has caught.

Be gay and good humor'd, complying and kind;
Turn the chief of your care from your face to your *mind*:
'Tis there that a wife may her conquest improve,
And Hymen shall rivet the fetters of love.

Special Notice
March 18—1766.

"As the Play to be acted on Thursday, the 20th Instant, is for the Benefit of our Brother, Mr. William Verling, the Members of Solomon's Lodge, with those of the several Lodges in Charles-Town also all transit Brethren, are requested to meet at the House of Mr. Robert Dillon at half after Four in the Afternoon of said Day, thence to proceed in Procession to the Theatre.

By Order of the Master.

L. DaCosta, Sec'ry.

Apr. 1, 1766:

Positively the Last Night this Season.
By Permission of His Honor the Lieutenant Governor
For the Benefit of Miss Hallam
At the Theatre in Queen Street, on Thursday next, being the 3d of April, will be presented
A Comedy never acted in America, called
"The School for Lovers."
After the Play will be perform'd an Ode set to Musick, called
"Gratitude and Love,"
Written by a Gentleman in the Province.
The Musick composed by Mr. Valton,
To which will be added (The Second Night)
"The Oracle."

Tickets to be had of Miss Hallam and
of Mrs. Cannon, where Places in the Boxes and
Copies of the Ode may be had.

Notwithstanding the above announcement, one more performance was given, on April 16, "Cato" and "Miss in Her Teens," Benefit of the Poor.

This was the first charity play given in Charles-Town.

The imperfect list of players for the season of 1766, on record, shows almost a complete change of cast; the principal omissions from the company being Lewis Hallam and Miss Cheer. The names we have on the bills of this year are Mr. and Mrs. Douglass, Miss Hallam, Miss Wainwright, Mrs. Osborne, Mr. Verling, Mr. Woolls, Mr. Wall, and Mr. Emmet; the last named and the Douglasses being the only ones who played in the Company of 1763-4 in Charles-Town.

April 29, 1766. Mr. Douglass' advertisement read: "The Lecture on Heads to be delivered at the Theatre on Queen street tomorrow to begin precisely at Seven o'clock."

On the same sheet is this card:

HENRIETTA OSBORNE

Intends immediately to depart this Province for Europe and gives this notice that all Persons having any Demands, may receive full satisfaction by applying to her at the House of Mr. Benjamin Hawes, behind the Old Church.

After the close of his regular seasons Mr. Douglass generally gave several evenings to his famous Lecture on Heads.

May 6, 1766 — Mr. Douglass' Advertisement: "The Lecture on Heads will be delivered This Evening and on Friday, At the Theatre in Queen Street," etc.

In the same paper is this card:

DAVID DOUGLASS

Intending to depart this Province very soon Desires the Favour of those who are indebted to him to discharge their account, and those who have Demands on him to come and receive Payment. May 6, 1766.

After leaving Charleston, Mr. Douglass went to Philadelphia to superintend the building of the Southwark Theatre, and when it was nearing completion he left for England to collect new members for his company and to have the scene-painting done for that house.

After summing up the productions of the Douglass Company at Southwark, Seilhamer says:

"All this goes to show that since Mr. Douglass' Company was last seen in New York, it had met with good fortune elsewhere, for the enterprising spirit it exhibited could only come with prosperity."

So much for old Charles-Town!

CHAPTER IV

"The Most Brilliant Dramatic Season Of Colonial America 1773-4

"Showing the only complete list of any Theatrical Season before the Revolution, save that of the Annapolis Engagement of 1760. One hundred and eighteen performances including eleven of Shakespeare's masterpieces: The First American Presentation of 'Julius Caesar': eight of Garrick's productions and all the Popular Operas of the time."—G. O. Seilhamer, "History of the American Theatre," 1749-1779, p. 330.

CHAPTER IV

South Carolina had now reached the high-water mark of her prosperity and a buoyant note had resounded through all of her up-building.

When she was harried by Spaniards and Indians, and when fire, hurricane, and fever had made desolate certain periods of her existence, her resilience was such that on the rebound from periods of depression she shot still farther ahead and her unconquerable spirit asserted itself.

During the most brilliant theatrical season of Colonial days, when every dramatic flower that had blossomed in this country was brought to deck her Thespian bowers, the following paragraph showing the town's advancement appeared in the South Carolina *Gazette* of January 9, 1774:

> Besides the stupendous work now nearly completed by Christopher Gadsden, Esq., at the North end of this Town which is reckoned the most extensive of the kind ever undertaken by any one man in America, it is amazing to observe the other improvements that have within a very few years past been made here and are daily carrying on. More than six new and commodious wharves have been added to our water-front. In the same period a great Assembly Room has been built, and within six months past an elegant Theatre established by which a Company of Comedians are handsomely supported.
>
> White Point is almost covered with houses, many of them very elegant. Several excellent academies have been established for the education of the Youth of this Province; great attention is also paid to the Fine Arts, the St. Cecilia Society warmly patronized music, while many Gentlemen of Taste and Fortune are giving the utmost Encouragement to Architecture, Portrait Painting and the ingenious performances of the first capital Landscape Painter that visited America, whose works will do him Honour.
>
> And shall it be said that such a People will suffer themselves to sink into Slavery?

The mutterings of the Revolutionary storm were making themselves heard, and the South Carolina

Gazette, which in former years had been the only chronicler of the theatrical companies visiting Charles-Town, now left most of the dramatic news to its contemporary, *The South Carolina and American General Gazette.*

Peter Timothy, who was now "Printer to the Honourable the Commons House of Assembly," had to make room in his columns for the presentments of the grand jury and, instead of theatrical notices, he called the people to serious business such as special meetings of the citizens who sympathized with their Boston friends when the British men-of-war were blockading that harbor; much space was given to the Boston Port Bill, and Charles-Town expressed her sympathy in the largest donations of money and supplies that were made to the suffering people. Measures were also discussed for preventing the landing of the "Odious Cargoes of Tea made subject to Duty" — and many such patriotic appeals were made as the following:

> According to the Hand-Bills that are stuck up, Thursday is the Day on which there is to be a General Meeting of the Inhabitants. Every Man who has the good of his Country at Heart, etc. ..... is invited to attend at Liberty Tree at 9 o'clock in the Morning!

Still the skies were not entirely enveloped in gloom and much heavenly blue still gladdened the hearts of the people.

All were not statesmen, and even these, until the last, looked as resolutely as they could upon the "silver lining" and cast off their cares with their business attire and turned their minds from war to peace and, in the evenings at least, gave themselves up to pleasing diversions and basking in the smiles of "the fair."

The popular Royal Governor, Lord Charles Greville Montague, and his sparkling and amiable Lady had just departed this Province, to the regret of the gay social set, but every one felt safe with the management of affairs in the control of the intrepid William Bull, who was a tower of strength, as Lieutenant-Governor.

The Theatre by this time was a much loved local institution, and during the spring and summer of 1773 a large subscription was raised "to build such a Play-House as would be in keeping with the rest of the handsome buildings then being erected in the town and a pride to her people." The finishings and furnishings were "to exceed anything of a like nature yet seen in this country," and the house was to be supplied with every convenience and a handsome set of scenes for the stage.

Mr. Douglass had given the building his greatest personal care and direction and was able to correct mistakes that had been made in his earlier ventures. The Church-Street Theatre of Charles-Town was larger than either the Southwark of Philadelphia or the John-Street Theatre in New York, and would accommodate large audiences.

The South Carolina *Gazette and Country Journal* printed this card:

THEATRE

Mr. Douglass returns his most grateful Thanks to the Public for the very generous Countenance they have given to his Address. He begs leave to inform them that the Subscription is in great Forwardness and a considerable part of the money already collected and deposited in the proper Hands for carrying the designs into Execution, the Receipts for which are lodged at Mr. Wells's on the Bay for the Inspection of Subscribers. Materials are collecting, Builders engaged and every possible step taken to compleat the undertaking early in November.

Those gentlemen who have not yet subscribed and would choose to add their names to a Catalogue already honoured with the Notice of a Number of most respectable Characters, will be obliging enough to signify their Intentions as soon as possible, at the Places mentioned in the Address.

August 14 — 1773.

Mr. Douglass had been invited by the people, and had gained permission from the Magistrates, to bring his Company to Charles-Town for the winter season, 1773-4, beginning in December.

The South Carolina *Gazette* of November 29, 1773, has this among the shipping notices:

From Philadelphia, in the Brig't Sea-Nymph, Capt. Moore, Mr. David Douglass, Manager of the American Company of Comedians, Mrs. Douglass, Mr. Lewis Hallam, Miss Hallam, Miss Storer, Mr. Henry, Mr. Woolls, Miss Wainwright; the remainder of the Company may be hourly expected in a sloop. The Theatre is in such Forwardness that we are told that it may be finished before Christmas.

The Theatre had not been completed as soon as expected, but the players were again in town, and the people rejoiced a fortnight later to read this announcement: "The New Theatre in this Town is to be opened on Monday next with 'A Word to the Wise', and 'High Life Below Stairs'."

This performance was to inaugurate a season such as was enjoyed at that time only in great European centres.

Douglass' Company had been very much strengthened, and the list of performances scheduled for the season of fifty-nine nights in a period of five months was almost bewildering in the array of seventy-seven distinct plays, farces, and operas, including the best of the English dramatists from Shakespeare down, and, as learned later, a sparkling sprinkling of local offerings.

Of many such we shall never know, for, grievous to relate, the pages of the South Carolina *Gazette* from

December 20 to December 27 are missing, and the files of the South Carolina and American *General Gazette,* begin with April 15, 1774—so that, unless other files of these invaluable old sheets should come to light, only a few of the casts of these plays can be recorded.

The account in Rivington's New York *Gazette* of the opening of this theatre was copied, as Seilhamer implies, from the South Carolina *Gazette,* and acknowledgments are made to "The History of the American Theatre" for the following:

OPENING OF THE CHARLESTON THEATRE.

On Wednesday last, the new theatre in this town was opened with Mr. Kelly's "Word to the Wise" and "High Life Below Stairs", with an occasional prologue and epilogue spoken by Mr. Hallam and Mr. Douglass.

The performance gave universal satisfaction. Mr. Hallam in particular, in *Captain Dormer*, displayed his extraordinary theatrical talents in a most splendid manner. Indeed, all the performers did great justice to their characters, but that gentleman's superior abilities were so remarkably striking that we could not pass them over unnoticed. The house is elegantly finished, and supposed, for the size, to be the most commodious on the continent. The scenes, which are new and well designed, the dresses, the music, and, what had a very pleasing effect, the disposition of the lights — all contributed to the satisfaction of the audience, who expressed the highest approbation of their entertainment.

Mr. Douglass' audiences throughout this season were always large, and in the matter of attire the most brilliant the American Company had ever played to.

A minute attention to elegance and propriety of dress was never beneath the notice of the courtly gentlemen who laid the foundations and builded this country thereon; the responsibility of state and the frivolity of dress did not in any way seem to hamper each other, and the richness and loveliness of Colonial fashions, handed down to us in old letters, inventories, and family portraits, is a part of the country's history.

The first advertisement after the opening of the Theatre, in the files of the *Gazettes* left to us, is this: December 27, 1773:

LOST

Supposed to be dropt at the Theatre last night, a Picture Bracelet set with brilliants and Rubies and twelve strings of Oriental Pearls to it. Whoever has found them and will deliver same to the Printer of this Gazette, shall be properly rewarded for their Honesty.

It has been the desire of the writer to prevent a single local historical fact concerning the drama in Charleston being irrevocably lost, in case of destruction of the old pages in which this history has been so long enshrined. The intention has been to embellish as little as possible the stated facts and to put entire reliance, for the interest of this work, upon the advertisements, local paragraphs, and criticisms themselves, in telling the story as it was written in the beginning—and therefore, save in a few unimportant instances, they are given in full, just as they appeared in the various *Gazettes.*

It will be recalled that on Wednesday, November 13, 1765, Miss Hallam and Miss Wainwright made their musical débuts in the Queen-Street Theatre in Charles-Town at a concert given by Peter Valton, the organist of St. Philip's Church. In view of the melancholy fact that the theatre-bills for the first three months of this brilliant season—with the scintillating glory of first-nights and first appearances — are all lost, the secondary interest of a concert may hold the attention a moment, when it is found that Miss Hallam and Miss Wainwright as well as Miss Storer and Mr. Woolls are again assisting Peter Valton. This notice appears in the South Carolina *Gazette* of February 14, 1774:

Mr. Valton's Concert of
Vocal and Instrumental Musick
will be performed on Tuesday the 15th
of February at Mr. Pike's New Assembly Room
The Vocal Parts by Miss Hallam, Miss Storer, Miss
Wainwright and Mr. Woolls.
A Concerto on the Harpsichord by one of Mr. Valton's Pupils,
and a Solo on the Violin by Mr. Abercrombie. etc.

This Mr. Abercrombie was the famous first violin brought out by the St. Cecilia Society, and of whom Josiah Quincy in his "Journal" makes this remark, after attending a St. Cecilia Concert:

"The Music was good, the two bass viols and French horns were grand. One Abercrombie, a Frenchman just arrived, played the first violin and a solo incomparably better than any one I ever heard. He cannot speak a word of English, and has a salary of five hundred guineas a year from the St. Cecilia Society."

The players were the friends of Charles-Town forty years before a single adverse criticism was made of them; but in the unsettled state of mind of the people in 1773-4, and the grave issues at stake, it was very natural that the more serious-minded should object to such lavish display and the extravagance incident to an unprecedentedly gay season, and complaints began to be registered.

A "foolish female," signing herself "Cleopatra," referred to the theatre then being erected as the "Devil's Synagogue;" but later she changed her mind and admitted that it was not as bad as she thought.

Another complaint was in a sermon preached by a Methodist minister, which was followed in the next paper by doggerel verse defending the players; and the third was this rather serious one:

SOUTH CAROLINA GAZETTE, FEBRUARY 28, 1774:

The following are the Two Presentments of the Grand Jurors at the last Session for this District which were quashed, and therefore not ordered to be published amongst the Rest—and are here inserted by Particular Desire:

"We present as a Grievance the Company of Players; a Play House in Charles-Town being unfit for the present low Estate of the Province; for although there is great Want of Money to procure the Conveniences and even the Necessaries of Life, yet large Sums are Weekly laid out for Amusements, these by Persons who cannot afford it; and is a Means of promoting the frequent Robberies that are committed and of Vice and Obscenity.

We recommend that the Legislature may suppress the same, tending to the Corruption of Youth and the Injury of many Families."

As shown, the majority of the law-makers voted against this measure and, as of old, stood up for the players. The only other mild rebuke was this:

"At a time when the Theatre is crowded and the Church neglected, a Friend of the Clergy begs leave to recommend to their Imitation the following specimen of Pulpit Eloquence, which is the introduction to a celebrated sermon of Mr. Toplady's on Ps. VIII, 3-4: 'When I consider thy Heavens, the Work of thy Fingers, What is Man?' " etc.

The next mention of the Theatre is found March 21, 1774, in an article describing the anniversary festivities of the Repeal of the American Stamp Act, which took the form of a military parade and review:

Besides what has been usual on Public Rejoicing Days, upon the present occasion the Charles-Town Regiment of Foot Militia and the late-formed Light Infantry Company all under arms, made a very handsome appearance; they looked like what it is hoped they will be. ..... The Review over, they repaired to Mrs. Swallow's Tavern where an Elegant Entertainment had been provided by the Officers. ..... In the Evening they went in a body to the Theatre where the Comedy of "The Recruiting Officer." with "The Oracle" was presented by particular Desire of the Officers. After the Play they returned to Mrs. Swallow's to Supper where they spent the night in a manner suitable to the Day, in loyal and harmonious Joy.

Sandwiched between "The Roman Father" on the 11th, and "The Way to Keep Him" on the 13th, Mr. Franceschini, under the patronage of the St. Cecilia Society, gave a Grand Concert of Vocal and Instrumental Music at the Theatre April 12, his part of the performance being Solos and Concertos on the Violin and Viola d' Amour and a Sonata on the Harpsichord.

In October, 1766, the South Carolina *Gazette* mentioned that Mr. David Douglass had returned to America and that he had collected some very eminent performers from both the theatres in London, "particularly in the Singing Way". These recruits of the American Company made their first appearance at the Southwark during its opening performances and played various engagements with the Company at the North in the intervening years and came to Charles-Town in November, 1773, to open the new theatre here.

The old members of the Company who had played here before were Mr. and Mrs. Douglass, Miss Hallam, Mr. Hallam, Miss Wainwright, Mr. Woolls, and Mr. and Mrs. Morris.

The most important person performing here for the first time was, of course, Miss Maria Storer who was a great favorite, dowered with beauty and magnetism, and was considered "the best public singer in America until 1792". The new male acquisitions to the Company, Messrs. Goodman, Hughes and Dermot, had played at the Southwark, but Mr. Davies was a newcomer.

The few bills and casts of this season which the most painstaking research have brought forth, follow ac-

cording to date, as well as every mention of the Theatre and Players, with the list of plays at the end.

SOUTH CAROLINA AND AMERICAN GENERAL GAZETTE.
April 15-22, 1774.
By Permission of
His Honour the Lieutenant Governour
For the Benefit of Mr. Goodman
At the New Theatre
By the American Company,
On Monday next, April 25, 1774 —
THE WEST INDIAN
Belcour, The West Indian

By a Gentleman for his Amusement, who never appeared on any Stage:

Major O'Flaherty .....Mr. Goodman
Capt. Dudley .....Mr. Douglass
Stockwell .....Mr. Morris
Charles Dudley .....Mr. Hughes
Varland .....Mr. Woolls
Fulmer .....Mr. Dermot
Stukely .....Mr. Davies
Lady Rusport .....Mrs. Douglass
Louisa Dudley .....Miss Storer
Mrs. Fulmer .....Mrs. Henry
Housekeeper .....Mrs. Davies
Lucy .....Miss Wainwright
Charlotte Rusport .....Miss Hallam

"An Occasional Prologue" addressed to the
Town, by Mr. Goodman
After the Play Mr. Hallam will present the
Audience with
A Picture of a Play-House, or
"Bucks Have At Ye All"
To which will be added an
English Burletta, called
MIDAS
FABULOUS DEITIES

Apollo .....Mr. Hallam
Jupiter .....Mr. Morris
Mars .....Mr. Douglass
Pan .....Mr. Dermot
Juno .....Mr. Davies
Minerva .....Miss Hallam
Mercury .....Mr. Roberts

MORTALS
Midas, by Mr. Goodman

Sileno .....Mr. Woolls
Damactas .....Mr. Henry
Daphne .....Mr. Morris
Mysis .....Miss Wainwright

Nysa, by Miss Storer

Tickets may be had at Mr. Wells's, the Great Stationery and Book Store; at Mr. John Calvert's in Church Street and of Mr. Goodman at Mr. Cox's in Tradd Street.

Both the above Plays may be had at Wells's Store.

APRIL 22-26, 1774

A Tragedy, Not acted this season
"Tamerlane, the Great, or the Fall of
Bajazet, Emperor of the Turks,"
with "Catherine and Petruchio" will be
presented tomorrow Evening, Wednesday,
April 27, at the New Theatre,
for the Benefit of
Miss Wainwright
After the Play, "Through the Wood Laddie,"
by Miss Wainwright.

APRIL 26-29.

A Comedy, Acted but once, etc.
For the Benefit of Mr. Hughes
"A Bold Stroke for a Wife"
[by Mrs. Centlivre]

Col. Feignwell, ...Mr. Hallam
Obadiah Prim, ...Mr. Henry
Tradelove, ...Mr. Douglass
Periwinkle, ...Mr. Morris
Simon Pure, ...Mr. Woolls
Sir Philip Morelove, ...Mr. Hughes
Freeman, ...Mr. Davies
Sackbut, ...Mr. Woolls
Mrs. Prim, ...Mrs. Douglass
Betty, ...Miss Wainwright
Ann Lovely .....Miss Storer

Being her First Appearance In That Character.
After the Play
"Through the Wood Laddie," by
Miss Wainwright
to which will be added
A Farce Never Performed There, called
"Neck or Nothing"

Sir Harry Harlow, ...Mr. Henry
Alip, ...Mr. Hughes
Martin, ...Mr. Morris
Mr. Stockwell, ...Mr. Dermot

Belford, ...Mr. Davies
Mr. Stackwell, ...Mr. Douglass
Jenny, ...Miss Wainwright
Miss Nancy, ...Miss Storer

The Comedy, "A Bold Stroke for a Wife," may be had at A. Wells's Store.

It is not generally known that the term "Simon pure" or "the Simon pure" as a description of anything genuine, was derived from the character in this old play of the hero who circumvents the fortune-seeker "Col. Feignwell" in his suit for the heiress, "Ann Lovely," and with his own honest, winning ways lays siege to her heart and captures the prize for himself.

In the South Carolina and Country *Gazette Journal,* May 10, 1774, appears this:

The Last Time but One
By Permission of
His Honour the Lieutenant Governour
For the Benefit of The
Charity Fund of the Union — Kilwinning
Lodge, appropriated to the Relief of the
Members of the Society of Free Masons,
their Wives, Widows, Children and Orphans,
when in distress.

AT THE NEW THEATRE
On Wednesday, May 11th, 1774,
By the American Company
Will be Presented the Tragedy of
"CATO"
Never (before) Performed There

Cato, ...Mr. Douglass
Sempronius, ...Mr. Hallam
Portius, ...Mr. Henry
Marcus, ...Mr. Goodman
Juba, ...Mr. Hughes
Syphax, ...Mr. Morris
Lucius, ...Mr. Dermot
Decius, ...Mr. Woolls
Lucia, ...Miss Storer
Marcia, ...Mrs. Morris

An Occasional Prologue to be spoken
by Mr. Hallam
An Eulogium on Masonry to be spoken as
an Epilogue by Mr. Goodman

The Masonic Anthem by Mr. Woolls
To which will be added
A Comedy of Two Acts called
"The Reprisal or
The Tars of Old England"
Never Performed There
Lieutenant O'Clabber, with a Song, by Mr. Henry

Ensign Maclaymore, ...Mr. Douglass
Lieut. Lyon, ...Mr. Goodman
Capt. Champignon, ...Mr. Roberts
Black, a drunken sailor, ...Mr. Hallam
Hearty, ...Mr. Davies
Brush, ...Mr. Hughes
Halyard, with "Hearts of Oak", ...Mr. Woolls
Harriet, ...Miss Storer

With a Song in Character
To conclude with "Rule Britannia"
At the end of Act 1 a new Mason's Song
with a Chorus.

Boxes, 35 s. Pit, 25 s. Gallery, 20s.

No Money will be taken at the Doors, nor any person admitted without Tickets. The Doors will be opened at Five and the Play begin precisely at Quarter past Six o'clock.

SOUTH CAROLINA GAZETTE AND COUNTRY JOURNAL MAY 6-13

THE LAST PLAY FOR THESE THREE YEARS

By Permission, etc. .....
On Monday next, May 16th, 1774

THE TRAGEDY OF
"DOUGLAS"

Douglas, ...Mr. Hallam
Glenalvon, ...Mr. Henry
Old Norval, ...Mr. Morris
Officer, ...Mr. Hughes
Anna, ...Miss Storer
Lady Randolph, ...Mrs. Douglass

To which will be added
"The Devil to Pay, or
The Wives Metamorphosed"

Sir John Loverule, ...Mr. Woolls
Jobson, ...Mr. Henry
Butler, ...Mr. Morris
Doctor, ...Mr. Hughes
Lady Loverule, ...Miss Wainwright
Lucy, ...Mrs. Morris
Lettice, ...Mrs. Davies
Nell, ...Miss Storer

No Money will be taken at the Door, etc. ..... Places in the Boxes, etc. .....

As it is almost impossible that the Performers can do their Characters that Justice their Duty to the Publick requires, when the stage is crowded, as it has been for several nights past, Mr. Douglass, at the earnest Desire, not only of the Performers, but of a numerous and respectable part of the Audience, begs Leave to inform the Town that —

No Person, on any Account whatsoever will be admitted at the Stage Door: and he is well assured that after this Representation, no Gentleman will insist upon it.

The above play proved to be "the last but one," for on May 19 "King John" and "Guardian" were performed, as a solicited Farewell, we assume, for the people felt that it would be a long time before they could enjoy these pleasures again, and although Mr. Douglass had promised to come back to them at the end of two years, many felt misgivings.

The following criticisms and list of productions appeared in two of the Charles-Town papers.

SOUTH CAROLINA GAZETTE, MAY 30, 1774.

From the *General Gazette* May 27.

CLOSE OF THE CHARLES-TOWN SEASON.

On Friday last the Theatre which opened here the 22nd of December was closed. Warmly countenanced and Supported by the Publick, the Manager and his Company were excited to the most strenuous Efforts to render their Entertainments worthy of so respectable a Patronage.

If it is considered how late it was in the Season before the House could be opened, the Variety of Scenery and Decorations necessary to a regular Theatre, the number of Plays represented and that almost every Piece required particular Preparations, it must be confessed that the Exertions of the American Company have been uncommon and justly entitles them to those marks of Public Favour that have for so many years stampt Merit in their Performances.

The choice of Plays hath been allowed to be very judicious, the Director having selected from the most approved English Poets such Pieces as possess in the highest Degree the *Utile Dulce*, and while they entertain, improve the Mind by conveying the most useful Lessons of Morality and Virtue.

The Company have separated until the Winter when the New York Theatre will be opened; Mr. Hallam being embarked for England to engage some Recruits for that Service. The year after they will perform at Philadelphia, and in the Winter following, we may expect them here with a Theatrical Force hitherto unknown in America. Scratch me, Countrymen! and I'll scratch thee.

DRAMATIC SEASON—1773-4

THE SOUTH CAROLINA GAZETTE, MAY 30, 1774.

Catalogue of Plays that have been Performed here this season by the American Company of Comedians, under the Direction of Mr. David Douglass:

DECEMBER 1773:

22 — A Word to the Wise and High Life Below Stairs
24 — Hamlet and Cross Purposes
27 — Suspicious Husband and Catherine and Petruchio
30 — Clandestine Marriage and Mayor of Garrat

JANUARY 1774:

1 — Earl of Essex and Irish Widow
3 — Love in a Village and Lethe
5 — Gamester and High Life Below Stairs
8 — Stratagem and King and Miller
10 — Constant Couple and Catherine and Petruchio
13 — Mourning Bride and Lying Valet
15 — She Stoops to Conquer and Irish Widow
17 — Jane Shore and Cross Purposes
19 — Busy Body and Love à la Mode
21 — Cymbeline and A Wonder!
25 — Beggar's Opera and Love à la Mode
27 — Romeo and Juliet and Miss in Her Teens
29 — Merchant of Venice and Devil to Pay
31 — Richard III and Thomas and Sally

FEBRUARY:

2 — Tempest and .....
4 — Love in a Village and Love a la Mode
7 — The Wonder and Midas
10 — Alexander the Great and King and Miller
12 — Tempest and Guardian
14 — George Barnwell and Edgar and Emmeline
17 — Henry IV and Thomas and Sally
19 — Theodosius and Citizen
21 — Bold Stroke for a Wife and Mayor of Garrat
24 — Othello and Damon and Phillida
26 — She Stoops to Conquer and Edgar and Emmeline
28 — Jealous Wife and Citizen

MARCH:

2 — Shipwreck and Catherine and Petruchio
4 — School for Fathers and Lethe
7 — Fashionable Lover and Padlock
10 — Maid of the Mill and High Life below Stairs
12 — King Lear and Irish Widow
14 — Tempest and Padlock
16 — Cymon and Miss in Her Teens
18 — Recruiting Officer and Oracle
21 — West Indian and Devil to Pay
25 — Provoked Husband and Lying Valet
26 — Romeo and Juliet and Flora

APRIL:
4 — School for Fathers and Bucks Have At Ye All
6 — English Merchants and Contrivances
8 — Fair Penitent and Cross Purposes
11 — Roman Father and Irish Widow
13 — Way to Keep Him and Contrivances
15 — Constant Couple and Lying Valet
18 — False Delicacy and Witches
20 — Julius Caesar (First time in America) and Register Office
22 — Macbeth and Young American in London
25 — West Indian and Midas
27 — Tamerlane and Catherine and Petruchio
29 — Cymbeline and Love à la Mode

MAY:
2 — Bold Stroke for a Wife and Neck or Nothing
4 — Orphan and Miss in Her Teens
7 — Clandestine Marriage and Apprentice
11 — Cato and Reprisal
16 — Douglas and Devil to Pay
19 — King John and Guardian

Of this season's performances twenty were operas, as follows:

1774:

Jan. 3 — Love in a Village by Arne
24 — Honest Yorkshireman by Carey
25 — Beggar's Opera by Gay
29 — Devil to Pay by Coffey

Feb. 4 — Love in a Village by Arne
7 — Midas (Ballad-burletta) by O'Hara
17 — Thomas and Sally by Arne
24 — Damon and Phillida by Cibber

Mar. 4 — Lionel and Clarissa by Dibdin
7 — Padlock by Bickerstaff
10 — Maid of the Mill by Bickerstaff
14 — Padlock by Bickerstaff
21 — Devil to Pay by Coffey
26 — Flora by Cibber

Apr. 4 — Lionel and Clarissa by Dibdin
6 — Contrivances by Carey
15 — Contrivances by Carey
18 — Witches by Love
25 — Midas by O'Hara

May 16 — Devil to Pay by Coffey[1]

This unprecedented American season included eleven of Shakespeare's masterpieces, with the first presentation of "Julius Caesar;" eight of Garrick's produc-

[1] This is the only complete list of any Theatrical Season before the Revolution, save that for the Annapolis engagement of 1760.

tions; Goldsmith's *chef-d'oeuvre,* "She Stoops to Conquer," and all the popular operas of the time.

JUNE 13 — SHIP SAILINGS —

Mr. Henry of the American Company of Comedians and many others are gone, Passengers in the Brigantine Sea-Nymph for Philadelphia and Miss Hallam of the American Company of Comedians in the Sandwich Packet-boat for Falmouth.

June 17 —

Mr. Henry, Mrs. Henry and Miss Storer of the American Company of Comedians are gone for England and Mr. Morris, Mrs. Morris, Miss Wainwright with several others of the same Company for New York and Philadelphia.

June 21 —

Mr. David Douglass, Manager of the American Company of Comedians, and Mrs. Douglass sailed in the schooner Rose, Capt. Ogilvie, for New York.

June 27 —

The whole Company of American Comedians are now gone different ways, except Mr. Goodman, who remains to deliver Mr. Stevens's Lecture upon Heads.

June 24 —

We hear that on Monday Evening the 4th of July will be delivered at the Theatre in Church Street by Mr. Goodman of the American Company and Mr. Allan from the Theatre Royal in Edinburgh, George Alexander Stevens's celebrated Lecture on Heads which has been exhibited upwards of Three Hundred successive Nights to crowded audiences in London with universal Applause.

Between the First and Second Parts, Mr. Foote's Prologue to the Author, by Mr. Allen.

The whole to conclude with Bucks Have At Ye All, after the Manner of Mr. King of the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, by Mr. Allen. N. B. There will be a Concert of Instrumental Music between the Several Parts of the Lecture.

July 15 —

The New Play House in Church Street, during the absence of the American Company from this Province is To Be Let for the Benefit of the Charity Fund of the Union Kilwinning Lodge; and as it is now entirely vacant, any persons desiring to rent the same for one or two Years, may apply for further Particulars to —

Robert Wells.

The Church-Street Theatre was destroyed during the disastrous fire of 1782, and the last mention made of it was through an advertisement of the Union Kilwinning Lodge to the effect that, finding it impracticable from the smallness of their fund to build the intended

suite of rooms on their lot whereon the Play-House lately stood, they would lease the land in lots, the first lot to be leased "by public sale on the spot on Tuesday the 11th day of October next, at twelve of the clock. Lease for a term of five years, forty feet of the front said lot on Church street, etc., ...with eighty feet deep, etc." For particulars apply to —

John Troup."

The Masons took an active interest in the theatre in Charles-Town from the very beginning. Robert Wells, who was the treasurer of the subscription funds for this theatre which Mr. Douglass was active in having built, was Grand Secretary of Solomon's Lodge and, judging from the above advertisements, Union Kilwinning Lodge must have purchased the property.

On the nineteenth day of June, 1774, Lieutenant-Governor Bull had his last official intercourse with the Commons House of Assembly, and his successor, Lord William Campbell, entered the Province, to remain a short while only, as the last Royal Governor of South Carolina.

The struggle had begun that was to make the American Provincials a free and independent people, and the following, which appeared in the *Gazette,* June 6, 1774, was the last mention of Charles-Town's observance of a time-honored custom: "Saturday last being the King's birthday, when His Majesty entered into the 36th year of his age — the same was observed here in the usual way; i. e., the bells were rung, colors displayed, guns at the forts fired: the Militia were reviewed and His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor had Company to dine with him in the Council Chamber;

but there was not a single house illuminated at night nor any other demonstration of joy; the people lamenting that so good a Prince should be beset by a Ministry who seem to have studied to alienate rather than preserve the affections of his most loyal subjects."

CHAPTER V

Charleston's Theatrical Interlude Between the Old Order and the New 1785

Mr. Ryan's American Company of Comedians Maria Storer in Concerts.

CHAPTER V

In the year 1783 the incorporation of the City of Charleston had been duly celebrated, and at the centennial of this event South Carolina's poet, Paul Hamilton Hayne, had written in retrospective vein of the city's birth:

> Pallid yet proud she stood that day, half sad, half joyous-hearted —
> As one who hears far off the roar of thunder-clouds departed;
> The War-bolt on her brow had left scarred furrows hot and gory —
> But lo! her calm exultant smile, her dark eyes flushed with glory!

The old order was passing away and the new being established, but nothing as yet was stable; there was a condition of restlessness and *malaise* everywhere, but the people had returned to their homes and were bringing order out of chaos as best they could. After the strenuous work of the day, they were beginning to long for evening diversions.

"The Loyal Ladies" and the "Patriotic Fair" had settled their differences of opinion and were together overcoming house-keeping difficulties, in a common desire for a normal state of living again, and that meant with Charlestonians social pleasures and diversions to lighten and sweeten with laughter the serious business of life.

They had not participated in any of the exciting entertainments of the British officers; none were given in Charles-Town save a few routs and balls and dinners to the loyalists. News had traveled to them of Burgoyne's Thespians in Boston—much to the disgust of the Conservative Bostonians—and of Howe's and

Clinton's Players in New York and Philadelphia. Sir Henry Clinton and his forces were too sternly engaged in Charles-Town, however, to leave any time for theatricals — and Charlestonians congratulated themselves that they were spared a "Meschianza" in their country's hour of peril. Pageants and Tournaments and tinsel Knights of the Blended Rose and the Burning Mountain tilting for laurels for their ladies were hardly in consonance with flesh-and-blood soldiers fighting with fire and sword.

But now, that victory had perched upon the American banners, their pent-up longing for brightness and mirth leapt with bounds over thoughts of past suffering and reached out eagerly for happiness.

The new guardians of law, order, and public morals, however, were so determined to fill their positions with dignity and honor and to give offense to none that they erred a little on the side of severity toward all public amusements. Their discountenancing every species of dissipation — "especially horse-racing and the exhibitions of shows, plays, and other expensive diversions and entertainments" — was following the lead of their Northern neighbors who had so long put obstacles in the pathways of the Players. But no ban had as yet been put upon theatres in Charleston, for the Theatre and the Race-Course were the constant resorts of the representative people.

The only ordinance upon the statute-books regulating the Amusements of the City simply emphasizes the fact that proprietors or managers shall be "duly licensed and authorized conformably to the ordinances and regulations of the City Council," etc. Some of the

straight-laced citizens did a good deal of talking and would each have enjoyed the position of censor. There were minor jolts and jars, but no serious objections were ever made to play-houses in this city.

The players who had returned to America or who had remained here in a quiescent state were feeling their way back to the stage very timidly and cautiously. They did not dare to call a play "A Play," but used all sorts of subterfuges and instead of Tragedies, Comedies, and Operas, they had Lectures and Entertainments of Representation and Harmony, Monodies, Roundelays, and Shadows of Shakespeare!

Charleston's offerings for the year 1785 were very few and modest, but as the *Gazettes* contained sufficient material relating to the stage for an Interlude between the last performances of the American Comedians on Charleston's boards in 1774, and the opening of her first post-Revolutionary theatre in 1786, it is hoped that the showing (although an "olla podrida") may be acceptable.

A little retrospection is necessary to bring the players out of the past and up to date.

After their last season in Charleston, finishing in 1774, most of the members of the American Company of Comedians went to Jamaica, and remained there playing at intervals for ten years. Mr. Hallam went to London and played in one of the theatres for a brief period before returning to America in 1784.

Mrs. Douglass had died, and Mr. Douglass had retired to private life and his managerial mantle had easily fallen upon the shoulders of Lewis Hallam, his stepson. Miss Wainwright was playing at Kingston

with the Company in 1779, but soon after married a Mr. Page and retired.

Mr. Godwin, in 1779, left Jamaica for America and joined the new American Company. Miss Cheer, who after her marriage to Lord Rosehill in Maryland in 1768 had "disappeared," came to light again, and she and Mr. Henry, although not members of the Company in Jamaica, both acted there and were tendered benefits, both offering original productions, Miss Cheer's called "The West Indian Lady's Arrival in London," and Mr. Henry's "The School for Soldiers."

Maria Storer's benefit was "Romeo and Juliet". Mr. Goodman, Mr. and Mrs. Morris, Mr. Woolls, and Mr. Wignell were members of the Company at this time, and Mr. Hallam's benefit on December 8, 1781, "The Belle's Stratagem" and "The Kingston Privateer," brought the season to a close.

No mention is made then or after of Miss Hallam, who gave so much promise, but it is supposed that she had married and left the stage or gone back to England.

After Mr. Hallam's return to America he was associated for a while with Mr. Allen, and later he and Mr. Henry joined forces. Mr. Henry had preceded him to America, and after various vicissitudes had formed an excellent company composed of most of those who had last played together in Kingston, and announced themselves as the "Old American Company."

This announcement was made on the night that Hallam and Allen opened the New York Theatre in 1785; and Mr. Hallam, with reason, objected to the usurpation of the name. After a conference, Mr. Henry proposed partnership, which was accepted by

Mr. Hallam, and for the next seven years the "Old American Company" ruled the theatrical field north of Mason and Dixon's line.

In January, 1782, Baltimore's first theatre was opened with Mr. Wall, formerly of the American Company, as active manager, and associated with him was Mr. Adam Lindsay. Mr. Wall had come from London to Charleston in 1765.

Music and dancing were the true handmaidens of the early strolling actor who many times would have been in sore straits without their assistance. Mr. Wall's first appearance was with the American Company playing in Charleston in 1776, within a year of his arrival in America.

To Wall and Lindsay must be accorded the honor of reviving the drama in America after the Revolution, and their Play-bills, which are preserved in the New York Historical Society, show that they produced the masterpieces of the time.

As manager and leading actor Wall achieved his highest ambition, and for a brief period occupied the centre of the stage. His wife was his leading-lady, and his young daughter made her début in his first season as the *Duke of York.* All his players were new to America and probably most of them were amateurs.

In Wall's production of "Venice Preserved," March 5, 1782, Mrs. Robinson first appeared, and her ability was immediately recognized. She seems to have been a mysterious figure on the stage, and very little was known of her or her whereabouts. She was evidently, or became, an intimate friend of the Walls, for as late as 1789 she was with Miss Wall in Charleston.

During Lindsay and Wall's second Baltimore season, Mr. and Mrs. Dennis Ryan became members of the Company, and by their superior abilities forged at once to the front. Nothing is known of their history, but it is supposed they had been acting in one of the Dublin theatres before coming to America.

On the 7th of February, 1783, Lindsay and Wall were succeeded in the management of the Baltimore Theatre by Dennis Ryan. The change seems to have been devoid of any unpleasantness, only four days elapsing between performances, and Mr. Wall and practically the entire company remained together in amity. The change was probably of financial benefit to Mr. Wall.

Under Ryan's management the Company played a short season in New York, returning to Baltimore, with some new members, for the season of 1783-4, and came to Charleston for a brief season in 1785. Dennis Ryan died in Baltimore in 1786.

One of Ryan's distinctions was the introduction into America of Sheridan's "School for Scandal" in which Mr. Heard created the original American *Sir Peter*; Mrs. Ryan, *Lady Teazle*; Mr. Wall, *Sir Benjamin;* and Mr. Ryan, *Moses.*

For the foregoing information credit is given to Seilhamer's "History of the American Theatre," from which is quoted, in conclusion:

> What is remarkable about this Baltimore Company is its great activity..... within the brief period of two years and one month, Mr. Wall appeared altogether in forty-one plays and twenty-nine farces, Mr. Ryan in twenty-eight plays and sixteen farces, and Mrs. Ryan the same; and of the minor players not fewer than twenty actors and fifteen actresses were introduced to the American stage during this time.

The first theatrical news-items discovered in the

THEATRICAL INTERLUDE

South Carolina *Gazettes* of 1785 might be called "Storer-ana," for the paragraphers seemed to take a keen interest in the movements of this beautiful and talented young actress. Under "West-Indian Intelligence," dated Kingston, March 11, 1785, is the following:

> We are assured that Miss Maria Storer, that celebrated Disciple of Calliope, intends taking her departure for Charleston the latter end of this month, and from thence will sail for Great Britain in order to be in time to get a winter engagement at one of the theatres in London.
>
> We hear it is now in contemplation to establish a concert of Instrumental Music in this town twice a month; Subscriptions having been opened for that purpose, which are nearly completed, so that the Sons and Daughters of Apollo will once again have an opportunity of enjoying their favorite amusement. The remaining few of the American Company have it in idea to perform occasionally at the theatre in this town so soon as strengthened by their expected auxiliaries, one of whom, a very decent performer, is just arrived in town, and another daily expected.

A reprint from the *Jamaica Gazette* in another of Charleston's weekly papers gives the Prologue to a Farce called "Miss out of Her Teens" performed at the Theatre in Harbour Street — "Written by a Lady, Spoken by Miss Storer as Miss Marlove Primrose."

During her first visit to Charleston in 1774 with Mr. Douglass's Company, Miss Storer must have fallen in love with the place and the people, for she seems to have spent considerable time here during the intervals in which she was not acting, and was shown many courtesies by the professional people of the town.

The newspaper of the day[1] announced at the end of March: "The celebrated Miss Maria Storer, who has performed for several years past at the theatre in Jamaica and one winter in this city with great applause, arrived here a few days ago from Kingston on her way to London."

[1] South Carolina *Gazette and Public Advertiser.* March 26-30, 1785.

Miss Storer either changed her mind and did not go to London, or if she went she did not make the hoped-for engagement and returned to Charleston, for on May 9 she was given a benefit at the City Tavern, when a Concert was performed.

Nothing has been found to substantiate the belief, but it is most probable that she remained in Charleston and played with Dennis Ryan's Company, which was in the city before the middle of March and played here the latter part of March and through April and the first week in May.

"We have the pleasure," says the *Gazette* of March 16, 1785, "to inform the Public that Mr. Ryan with the American Company of Comedians arrived here a few days ago, and expect to perform in the course of this week, having obtained permission for that purpose from the Magistrates."

Mr. Ryan had anticipated Mr. Henry in appropriating the prestige along with the name of the first American Company—and, although Lindsay and Wall had been content to be known as the Baltimore Comedians, he bravely took unto himself the best there was, and as the Company boasted the name of at least one of the original comedians, Mr. Wall, Mr. Ryan felt justified and that he was not sailing under false colors.

The handsome theatre that had been built under the superintendence of David Douglass had escaped the shells of the Revolution, but had been swept away in 1782 with other buildings in one of Charleston's many disastrous fires, so recourse was had to the Old Exchange, which was converted into a temporary theatre.

This venerable landmark, which was recently en-

THE OLD EXCHANGE, BUILT 1771

trusted to the care of the South Carolina Daughters of the American Revolution, to have, to hold and to cherish, is one of the most interesting historic buildings in the city. It was completed in 1771, at a cost of "forty-four thousand and sixteen pounds, five shillings and seven pence currency," on the site of the old Watch-House or Guard-Post, where the pirates, Stede Bonnet and his men, were imprisoned in 1718.

In 1774 the Provincial Congress here assembled and set up the First Independent Government in America.

From the steps of the Exchange General Washington receive the honors of the citizens welcoming him to Charleston in 1791; here was given a Ball in his honor; and from its portico facing Broad Street all the earliest Governors of South Carolina had been proclaimed. The Old Exchange is now in perpetual trust and guardianship of Rebecca Motte Chapter, for the State of South Carolina.

The Library's files of papers are most sadly deficient during the period of Ryan's season in Charleston, and there is only one bill and a partial cast and a few paragraphs to put on record.

It was announced on March 16 that the performances would begin in the course of that week; but it probably took longer to convert an Exchange into a theatre than had been reckoned upon, and it was almost two weeks before the initial performance was announced in the State *Gazette* of South Carolina:

By Permission
This Evening, March 28th, 1785
The Theatre in the City Exchange
of Charleston
Will be Opened by the American Company
of Comedians
With a Tragedy

Inscribed to his Excellency, General Washington
Called the
ROMAN FATHER
To conclude with a
Transparent Scene and Procession
In which will be introduced the much admired air
"When Peace Waves her Ensign of Snow o'er the Land",
By Miss Wall
And the Allemande Dance
By
Mr. Patterson and Mrs. Kidd.

All the early post-Revolutionary managers burnt incense on their altars to the Father of his Country, or others in authority, who might make the rugged path they were treading at the time a little easier. But General Washington was a good theatre-goer, and it is said that his Ledger showed many entries set down to the Play-House in Williamsburg, where the Virginia Company, through the permission of "the Worshipful the Mayor of Williamsburg," delighted the people in the old Theatre near the Capital. * * * *

"The Roman Father" was by Whitehead and had been long a favorite with the various companies in America. Ryan's Baltimore cast was:

Publius Horatius, ...Mr. Ryan
Tullius Hostitius, ...Mr. Lewis
Valerius, ...Mr. Smith
Horatius, ...Mr. Heard
Horatia, ...Mrs. Ryan
Valeria, ...Mrs. Elm

It was probably the same in Charleston.

Transparencies and processions gave color and movement that were appreciated by all audiences in this transition period, for any gay spectacle appealed to the people, coming just after war-time gloom and depression. Transparent scenery was invented in 1780 by Philippe Jacque de Southerberg, R. A., and member of the Academy of Painting, Paris.

We know from a New York letter that the season was successful, and that Dennis Ryan and his company were playing in Charleston "before crowded audiences with great applause," even though there is not another paragraph to show for it save a letter from a subscriber to the *Gazette* on May 21, mentioning the high prices and large attendance. The letter, for several reasons, is worth a place here, and followed a notice of the departure of the players, from Charleston, May 7, 1785, on the schooner "Play-Actor."

From the article mentioned above, appearing in the *Gazette* over the signature "Senex," we quote several paragraphs which give a very good idea of the financial status of some of the citizens soon after the Revolution, as well as the theatrical note:

If my surprise at first was visible on hearing a tradesman complain of distresses while he was living with all the parade of a King, you may naturally imagine my astonishment was in no way diminished when I heard him speaking of two thousand a year as an object wholly below his consideration. I remember the time when he and I looked upon a quarter of the money as a very capital saving between us in the twelvemonth; but then, indeed, neither of us attempted to keep a chariot nor treated with turtle. .....Yet those were happy times and we never once complained at the decline of trade nor thought our country tottering on the brink of destruction..... If we are undone we are the most splendidly ruined of any nation in the universe!..... We nevertheless find a sufficiency to defray the charges of a Play; the more extravagant the entertainment the more crowded we always find the company. An amusement is reckoned vulgar in proportion to its cheapness and those only are followed with any kind of avidity at which the charges of a single evening would afford a week's decent provision for a middling family.

Prosperity is the general parent of insolence.....we never were so rich, but we never were so extravagant..... Such, Gentlemen, are my sentiments of our distresses!

In 1783 when everything artistic in America must have been at a very low ebb, with the enemy still within

the gates, we have light thrown on the musical situation through a German letter of the time[1]. It says:

"In Charleston there were two concerts twice a month by four first and three second violins, two violas, two violoncellos, two bassoons, one harpsichord, two clarinets or oboes, two flutes and two horns. We met there the following musical artists, Franceschini, an Italian, Abercrombie, a Scotchman, and Peter Walton" [a German.] "Music supports her Master handsomely in America and one may speedily make a fortune through her."

It was no doubt Charleston's good musical facilities that made the city so pleasant an abiding place for Maria Storer, for she was here until the 28th of January, 1786.

The next item of "Storer-ana" that the papers afford appeared in the State *Gazette,* May 9, 1785.

For the Benefit of Miss Storer
On Tuesday Evening, the 17th Instant
Will be Performed at the City Tavern
A CONCERT
Of Vocal and Instrumental Music
To begin at half past seven o'clock.
Tickets at half a Guinea each, to be
had of Miss Storer at Mrs. Ramadge's
No. 4 Cumberland Street.

No mention is made in the press of the outcome of this venture—but more than likely it drew together all the music-lovers of the town, who from that time on included Miss Storer, whenever she was in the city, in the musical set, and a little more than a month later she lent her musical gifts to a charitable cause. On June 25, 1785, appeared this notice:

"Tomorrow at St. Michael's will be performed by

[1] "Musikalische Bibliothek," Vol. I-1784. Reprinted by O. G. Sonneck in the New Music Review, 1912.

Miss Storer three of the most select Anthems from the Oratorio of the Messiah. There will be a collection at the Church door for a charitable purpose."

It was owing to a thoughtless remark and also to Miss Storer's unfortunate disposition, which so dimmed the lustre of her later career, that she felt called upon to insert the following card in the *Gazette* of June 30, 1785, the day after the Sacred Concert:

> Miss Storer impatient to remove from her character the odium thrown on it by a report now in circulation, "that the collection at church was designed for her," begs leave to assure the community that she expects no other favour, than such as, she flatters herself, her services have merited. Her circumstances do not render it necessary to solicit the humane; if they did, Providence had been pleased to deprive her of her abilities (the only probable means by which she could become a burthen to them) yet would her own feelings effectually prevent her appealing to theirs, through so public, so indelicate a channel.

A very interesting addenda to the notice has just come to light in the "Life of Noah Webster," edited by his great grand-daughter, Emily Elsworth Ford Skeel, in which the great lexicographer notes some of his impressions of Charleston. He arrived on Sunday, June 26, 1785, and writes:

"Sunday — arrive in harbor at 8 o'clock. Go on shore and get lodgings at Wilch's in King Street. Pleased with the appearance of the town. Go to St. Michael's Church, hear Parson Smith. Miss Storer sings part of Handel's Oratorio. Very odd indeed! A woman sings in public after Church for her own benefit! I do not like the modern taste in singing. The people of Charleston are very polite. They behave with great decency in Church."

In a lesser journal he also mentions St. Michael's and Miss Storer: "She sung a part of the Oratorio of

the Messiah; the organ joined. An odd affair this, for a woman to sing for benefit; but I put a quarter of a dollar in the plate. She sung well in the modern taste, but I cannot admire it."

Any notice with the word "Theatre" in it compels attention. So: "By permission of the City Council, Mr. Partridge will open his Theatre with a general display of Horsemanship, etc. Mr. Partridge has engaged the famous Singer Plasidora: Has performed before the Kings of France, Spain, and Portugal and the Emperor of Germany and all the Nobles of the different Courts with universal applause. He will dance a Hornpipe on twelve eggs to admiration."

The foreign news columns of Charleston's early papers were most interesting, and were seemingly written to please all readers; even the women and young girls were not forgotten; and they must have scanned the fashion notes with great glee. Here is a paragraph from a London Letter, printed in Charleston July 2:

> Beaumarchais' new play has given rise to a head-dress in Paris, and, as folly travels faster than wit, the fashion has reached London where the Comedy is yet unknown. It is called "La Plume de Figaro" and is much worn by the belles of fashion. The Werter bonnet is much the rage — the *Charlotified* wearer assumes the pensive air of Werter's favorite girl, and seems conscious that they have equal power to inspire love and kill men.

In the same paper are advices from Jamaica stating that the American Company of Comedians (unaware that their name had been appropriated in America) had begun their benefits and intended to embark for this continent very shortly.

The Charleston *Morning Post,* January 20, 1786, under the title of "The Theatre," in an article signed

"Civis," informs the Printers that a gentleman of the first character at the bar intends bringing forward a bill for licensing a theatre on the next meeting of the Legislature. He brings forward many arguments pro and con, but speaks hopefully of the dramatic taste of the English at present, "who rigidly discountenance indelicacy."

He thinks that the works of Farquhar, Congreve, and Vanbrugh, even with all their wit, should for the most part be consigned to oblivion. He objects to any plays "which would put the ladies into confusion, obliging them to raise their fans," but he deplores the paucity of wit in the plays written in the last ten years and scores the nonsensical jingles of Mr. O'Keefe, but which on account of their very absurdity "force even the stoic to grin."

He thinks it shows a vast lowering of taste that these extravagances of O'Keefe's "are stamped with a currency and celebrity too frequently refused to sterling genius." "Imagine," he says, "people with any refined sensibilities being entertained by such stuff as this." (From "the Castle of Andalusia.")

A master I have, and I am his man,
Galloping dreary dun
And he will get married as fast as he can
With my haily, gaily, gamborally
Giggling, niggling, galloping
Galloway, draggle-tail, dreary dun.....
Ditherun, doodle adgety,
Nagity, tragedy rum,
Goostnerum foodle fidgety
Nidgedy nagety mum.

The legislators of the new America wished to start the country in the right way, and Civis suggests to them that if they could, "consistently with their mani-

fold avocations undertake the superintendence of the pieces to be performed before they should be presented to the public, all difficulties would be at an end. With respect to American dramatic pieces, this censorship is not requisite. The morals and manners of this country are too chaste to leave reason to apprehend that any improper plays will be written here for perhaps centuries to come. The grand object is to make a judicious selection from the British drama. I am informed that when Ryan's performers exhibited in this city, the then Intendants carefully perused every play previous to its representation, and carefully expunged every passage that had a probable tendency to indecency or irreligion."

Question: Does not this constitute America's first suggested censorship of plays?

As the year 1786 is dominated by Godwin and Charleston's first post-Revolutionary theatre, it seems more fitting to bring forward at this time a few paragraphs concerning the Ryans and Maria Storer than to sandwich them between Harmony Hall's productions in the next chapter.

On January 28, 1786, the *Morning Post* contained this notice: "This day will sail, if the wind is favorable, the sloop Diana, Capt. Hull, for New York, in which Miss Storer embarks for the purpose of joining the American Company of Comedians."

A contemporary paper announces it thus: "Miss Storer, who has afforded so much amusement by her vocal abilities to the polite circles of this city, has embarked for New York, with the intent of joining the American Company of Comedians.

The illness of Mr. Hallam and many members of the American Company made numerous postponements necessary during the first three months of the year 1785, when Hallam and Henry were playing, in New York, their first season as partners, and Maria Storer appeared for the first time that year on May 29 at Mr. Henry's benefit performances of Bickerstaff's "Maid of the Mill" and his own version of "The Oracle," which he called "Daphne and Amintor."

After these first performances, in which Miss Storer's powers were greatly praised, she was billed as *Mrs. Henry.*

During this whole season there was violent opposition to the stage both in New York and in Philadelphia and the Thespians had a hard fight for life.

From the two following notices in the Charleston *Morning Post and Daily Advertiser* of May 6, 1786, and a month later, it would appear that after her appearances at the John-Street Theatre in April, Miss Storer (still so called in Charleston) returned to this city, for on the first mentioned date we read: " 'Lamentation of Mary Queen of Scots' written by Lord Kames and sung by Miss Storer, with great applause, at the St. Cecilia Concert in this City." Exactly one month later, June 6, appears this information: "Miss Maria Storer is so far recovered from her late indisposition as to make her appearance on the stage at New York where she has been received with great applause."

In January, 1786, had appeared, on the 26th, in the Charleston *Evening Gazette* the death notices of two players —

"Died at Baltimore, Mr. Dennis Ryan, late Manager of the Company of Comedians who performed in this city last summer;"

"Died at Savannah, Mrs. Godwin, wife of Mr. Godwin, Comedian."

CHAPTER VI

HARMONY HALL
OPENED 1786

CHAPTER VI

Traces of the war were fast disappearing under the efforts of the people at readjustment. The skies were blue again, the mocking-birds were singing, and nature wore a smiling aspect.

Loyal subjects had become a sovereign people and had begun working out American problems.

Not since the time of William and Mary, when divine protection had been invoked on the copper coins of 1694, "God preserve Carolina and the Lords Proprietors," [1] had the people given so much attention to their currency, and they were now with much reluctance giving up good yellow gold, even though bearing the solid features of Georgius Rex, for American paper money.

Judge Heyward had presided at a meeting of the planters at the State House where it was "Resolved unanimously as the opinion of this meeting that it is indispensably necessary that the credit of the Paper Medium issued under the authority of the Legislature should be supported as equal in value to the specie," etc.

The Charleston *Morning Post* of September 26, 1786, printed a New York letter from which the following paragraph pertinent to the Planters' resolution is taken: "We cannot avoid congratulating the public that, while in some of the Southern and Eastern states the greatest confusion and distrust prevails respecting their paper emissions, in South Carolina the people are

[1] Among the rarest and most valuable American coins is the Carolina Elephant, a token or medal of the Lords Proprietors. It is copper with the figure of an elephant on the obverse and the above legend on the reverse.

so seemingly alive to the fatal consequences which would attend a depreciation, that in their individual and collective capacities they are using every effort to support the credit of their paper medium and establish its full circulation."

In February, 1785, appeared the first advertisement of a meeting of those interested in the introduction into Charleston of flying stages and stage wagons on the same plan as those plying in the Northern states; the first line was to be run between this city and Savannah, Georgia, twice every week, and "oftener if encouragement is given."

In 1786 several lines were running and the following advertisements appeared in the current papers — June 2, 1786. "The Post Stages will start for Savannah next Wednesday morning at 4 o'clock and arrive there on Thursday evening. Places taken at the City Tavern N. Twining."

Summer excursionists who now come over from Savannah to spend the day at Charleston's Isle of Palms may be interested in the change of schedule from 1786.

"Post Stages will leave Haddrell's Point for Georgetown," etc. "A very handsome Stage Coach will set off from Mr. Gilbert's at the Red Lyon, No. 161 King Street, for Pacolet Springs," etc.

Charleston during the year 1786 had three papers: The Charleston *Evening Gazette*, a daily; the *Columbian Herald,* and the *Charleston Morning Post.*

Gloom was banished, peace at last had smoothed the furrowed brow of care; free steps were light and elastic, heads were held proudly high and pleasure had perched

on the ramparts singing "laughter lengthens life," and looked with eager eyes upon the rearing and completion of a temple to the muses to replace those that were no more.

Just outside the city walls, behind the fortifications where so lately carnage was rife, Mr. Godwin elected to rear Charleston's first post-Revolutionary theatre, and to cover up the physical scars of battle by changing the spot to a pleasure resort, laying out grounds, and erecting an attractive little playhouse which he called Harmony Hall.

While the General Assembly was frowning upon the resumption of plays in America, and New York and Philadelphia were strongly protesting against the return of the players, the wily managers, fighting for their life, turned the crying of their wares into literary and musical adventures and called them "Entertainments of Representation and Harmony," and it was probably from this that Godwin selected the name of Harmony Hall for his new house of amusement.

While South Carolina never legislated against the theatre, the Managers were often fearful lest she should follow the example of the Northern states, and so they were very cautious in their earliest advertisements, and a play masqueraded under various disguises until the pulse of the community had been felt.

Simultaneously with the appearance of Hallam and Allen's Company in New York, August 24, 1785, a theatre was opened at Savannah, Georgia, by Godwin and Kidd with Mr. and Mrs. Godwin, Mr. and Mrs. Kidd and Ladies and Gentlemen "for their amusement"

forming the Company. They opened with "Cato," followed by "Catharine and Petruchio." [1]

They had built Savannah's first theatre and intended locating there, but, Charleston offering greater inducements, Mr. Godwin decided to try his fortunes in South Carolina, and Mr. Kidd soon followed, becoming a member of his Company and playing at Harmony Hall.

The annual license for theatrical entertainments in Charleston in 1785 and later was 100 pounds sterling, so by building his playhouse "without the city" Godwin escaped this fee.

The first mention that we find of Mr. Godwin in the Charleston press is this in *The Columbian Herald,* May 4, 1786:

"Mrs. Stras from London purposes to give tuition in the Art of Music — an accomplishment which she attained by long practice in Paris — particularly the lyre or harp. She will also give instructions for the Violin and Guittar. Her terms may be known by applying to her at Mr. Godwin's School for Dancing in King street No. 175."

Terpsichore usually preceded Thalia and kept her constant company in all the early dramatic enterprises. Dancing between the play and the farce was a regular part of the evening's entertainment and, when not acting, most of the early Managers gave instruction in dancing and fencing and sometimes music.

In the *Columbian Herald* of May 20, 1786, is the first mention of the play-house: "Mr. Godwin is building a place of entertainment at Louisburg; it is to be called

[1] Seilhamer's "History of the American Theatre."

Harmony Hall where may be expected an olio of perfection in folio."

The site chosen for the erection of Harmony Hall had been the scene of activity for many years for it was near the present northeast corner of Meeting and Calhoun Streets.

All the old printed authorities and all the living antiquarians of Charleston have been consulted as to the wherefore of the name "Louisburg" (in the old papers often spelled with an h) but without success. The only other American Louisburg which has been located was the French stronghold on Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, which during the early American raids by the French and Indians was captured by the New England colonists at the period of the inter-Colonial Wars in 1745: after covering themselves with glory by this capture, the New Englanders were much chagrined that this territory was returned to the French when peace was declared in 1748. Among the French inhabitants of Charleston, could one of them have been empowered to name this suburb, and for some reason of pleasant association to himself called it Louisburg?

Tobacco Street in front of the Citadel takes its name from the large crops brought by wagons from Virginia, and stored in the warehouse fronting upon it where the Citadel now stands, and beside it was a famous well, the water of which had well known medicinal properties, and people came from miles around to drink it and it was bottled and shipped away. This was no doubt the artesian water which today is highly esteemed and is still famous for its good qualities.

Old Inspection Square is now known as Marion

Square, and during the Revolutionary War the town gate was erected there, covered by tabby or shell-horn work, a remnant of which is still standing.

Above Inspection Street were a Nursery and a beautiful Botanical Garden, containing a great variety of flowers, blooming shrubs, and rare bulbs and plants imported by the English gardeners, John and George Watson. The Watsons sent quite a number of South Carolina's indigenous plants to beautify London's public gardens, thus making a fair floral exchange. A charming tea-house at the end of a pier which projected from South Bay, and Watson's Botanical Gardens, were at this time the principal places of outdoor amusement for Charlestonians.[1] The Watsons advertized that "Genteel company will be accommodated with the best liquors, attendance, coffee, tea, relishes and sundry amusements," and at the time of the building of the theatre a new tea house was opened.

The *Columbian Herald* stated: "Near Watson's Garden, Mrs. Christian has opened a House of Entertainment where Ladies and Gentlemen may be accommodated with Tea and Coffee in the genteelest taste. She has also Porter and other Liquors of the best kind and on the most reasonable terms." So the new Theatre was set amidst social and convivial as well as historical surroundings.

The following ingratiating announcement to the Public from Mr. Godwin appeared every week during June, 1786:

The Charleston *Morning Post* and *Daily Advertiser*. June 9, 1786.

To the Public

Mr. Godwin has leased a Lot of Land next to the Louisburg Hotel,

[1] "Charleston, the Place and the People." Mrs. St. Julien Ravenel.

without the city, for a term of years, and having erected a building thereon to be known by the name of Harmony Hall, he proposes to establish the same as an Academy for Oratory, Music, Dancing and Fencing.

In the course of the year will be given some two or three benefits for public uses and charitable purposes. Every possible exertion will be used to render the amusements of Harmony Hall rational and innocent and in every way worthy the approbation of the sensible and polite inhabitants of South Carolina.

Mr. Godwin most respectfully assures those Ladies and Gentlemen who may patronize him, that gratitude shall write their names in his heart and lead him to acknowledge the obligation that will so much honor him.

The next mention of Harmony Hall appeared in one of the local paragraphs of the *Morning Post* on June 30, as follows:

"A correspondent, feeling a curious propensity to view Harmony Hall, obtained permission from the Manager, and was astonished to find such a beautiful little theatre could be completed in so short a time. If a similar genius and industry are exerted in promoting the entertainments proposed to be exhibited, Harmony Hall will undoubtedly be a place of resort for the fashionable and the polite."

The *Morning Post* of July 2nd contained this announcement:

HARMONY HALL
At Louisburg, without the City,
MR. GODWIN
Most respectfully acquaints the Ladies and
Gentlemen of Charleston that on Thursday the
6th of July in the forenoon at Eleven o'clock
Harmony Hall will be opened Gratis for the satisfaction
of those who may wish to see it previous to the first
night's exhibition. The band of Musicians will
attend to rehearse several pieces of select music.
On Monday Evening the 10th of July a Grand Concert
of Music will be given.
[The opening was postponed until Tuesday evening]

Full page announcement in the Columbian Herald, July 11, 1786.

OPENING OF HARMONY HALL
Tuesday Evening July 11th at Seven O'Clock.
By Desire will be performed

A Grand Concert of Music, In Three Acts
Selected from the most Celebrated Composers, etc.
Between the Acts to be exhibited a
Variety of Paintings of Ancient and Modern Heads,
With a Lecture by Mr. Godwin
Prologue — Tragic and Comic Muse,
The Celebrated Dr. B. Franklin with the
motto affixed to his bust at Paris, etc.
After the Second Act Transparencies and an
Ode by Mr. Godwin, then
"Bucks Have At Ye All"
After the Third Act of the Concert a Hornpipe
Then a Foreign Gentleman will perform a few choice
pieces with a Pantomimical Dance called
"L' Amour du Vin"
Italian Shepherd by Mr. Godwin,
Peasant by Mons. Carré.

.....

A person will attend at the office of Harmony Hall every Day to let Boxes. Front Boxes are for parties of Ten and Side Boxes for Parties of Six. Each Box has a key to be given to the Person who takes it. The Gate fronting Boundary Street will be open at Half Past Five O'Clock and the Concert commence at Seven.

Tickets for the Pit at Five Shillings each, to be had at Mr. Waller's store on Beal's Wharf, at Bowen and Markland's No. 11 Elliott Street and at the office above mentioned.

No admittance to the Boxes but by Parties. No more tickets for the Pit are issued than to the number of persons it will accommodate; therefore Ladies and Gentlemen are desired to apply for tickets early as the Doorkeeper is under a binding engagement to reject money at the Door.

N. B. New Heads, with Singing and Dancing each night of the Concert.

Mr. Godwin had probably had some assurances of good audiences and felt the need of assistance, and the *Evening Post* of July 11, 1786, thus gives the public his confidence:

"Mr. Godwin has written to Mrs. Ryan at Baltimore, requesting she will join him with her theatrical auxiliaries. The muster will then be pretty strong. *King,* Godwin; Herd, an excellent *Prime minister;* Lewis and Wall, *pleasant in light characters;* in the back ground our old acquaintance, Kidd, *respectable in solid parts of great length and level speaking;* as to the ladies, there will be Mrs. Gifford *an old performer,* excellently

studied in stage affairs; Mrs. Hyde, *eminent for her vocal powers;* Mrs. Ryan, *at home in your aunts, mothers, chamber-maids and queen's;* Miss Wall, *grown big enough to speak for herself;* and a troop of subalterns, who will, as usual, make much noise to very little purpose."

Mrs. Ryan and her auxiliaries did not accede to Mr. Godwin's request, and his ingenuities were taxed to the utmost to provide the promised entertainments. Although Mrs. Ryan was not willing to cooperate with Godwin she was probably having troubles of her own, as was gathered from a local of June 9:

"Mrs. Ryan who figured here as the "Queen of Harlothrumbo" manages and directs a company at present in Baltimore where is frequently performed a new edition of Shakespeare or Johnson with such alterations and *expundations* as often leave the bewildered auditors in some doubt how to find out the plot. There is however a Mrs. Gifford associated with the Company who unites elegance and grace with spirited action and judicious emphasis."

The criticisms of the opening night of the new amusement hall were eagerly read by its future patrons, and it was fully written up in three different styles, with the Charleston letter to the New York Independent, following some time later, as a fourth.

Wednesday, July 12, 1786 — Morning Post. Harmony Hall was opened with the entertainment of a Syllabus or Lecture, consisting of George Alexander Stevens's Lecture on Heads; a bust of Dr. Franklin, with observations on his eminent character; a monument with transparencies and a bust of Gen'l. Richard Montgomery, to whose memory an ode was spoken by Mr. Godwin; "Bucks Have At Ye All!" and a Pantomimical Dance by Mr. Godwin and Monsieu Carré. The Entertainment was introduced with a Prologue describing the anticipation in opinion which had taken place relative to Mr. Godwin and his new undertaking. The audience

received the lecture with great satisfaction and rewarded the lecturer with unbounded applause; however it will be an improvement if the future lectures are calculated to take up less time, it being impossible for a single person to entertain his auditors for three hours, without their falling into a condition of indifference and lassitude; the truth of this observation was evident last night, although Mr. Godwin was equally if not more successful than George Alexander Stevens, who performed the material parts of the lecture eighty nights running at the Haymarket Theatre to crowded audiences.

This local paragraph was in the same paper. "A demi-rep sported her person in the first row of the Pit, Tuesday Evening at the lecture, and in this conspicuous situation was thrown into much confusion when the lecturer held the mirror up to nature, showing to virtue its endearing graces and loveliness, to vice, its odiousness and deformity."

Charleston's two newspapers, in both of which Mr. Godwin advertized, kept the public pretty well informed as to the happenings in the new theatre.

July 13, 1786. The Columbian Herald.

Harmony Hall

was opened for the first time on Tuesday evening to a polite and numerous (though not overcrowded) audience. The beauty and airiness of this elegant little theatre, the brilliancy with which it was lighted, the masterly execution of the paintings, the spirit and humour with which Mr. Godwin delivered the lectures, the excellence of the music, in short, the *tout ensemble* of the one whole entertainment were so highly pleasing that the audience testified their satisfaction by repeated bursts of applause; and notwithstanding the length of the entertainment, which lasted near three hours, there was not a sympton of indifference or lassitude.

During the whole entertainment there was not the smallest disturbance or interruption. The whole was conducted with the utmost regularity and decorum, and the audience retired pleased, instructed and delighted.

A Charleston Letter on this opening, sent to the New York Independent Journal, was not copied in the Charleston paper till almost a month later, but it is inserted here:

New York Independent Journal, August 5, 1786.

HARMONY HALL

We hear from Charleston, S. C., that a principal merchant of that city and a Mr. Godwin, comedian, have leased a lot of land for five years and have erected a building called Harmony Hall, for the purpose of music meetings, dancing and theatrical amusements. It is situated in a spacious garden in the suburbs of the city. The boxes are twenty-two in number with a key to each box. The pit is very large and the theatrum and orchestra elegant and commodius. It was opened with a grand Concert of music *gratis* for the satisfaction of the principal inhabitants, who wished to see it previous to the first night's exhibition.

The above building has cost 500 pounds sterling. Salaries from two to five guineas per week and a benefit every nine months is offered to good performers.

Another dramatic critic gives his opinion of the house and the Manager, July 14, in the Charleston *Morning Post*:

The Theatre at Louisburg is constructed upon as good a concerted plan, and has as cheerful an appearance as any erection for public exhibitions we ever remember to have seen on a similar scale. Certainly it is not fit to be put in a line of comparison with the Capital theatres of Europe as to glare and magnificent appearance, for many of these buildings originally cost immense sums, and are every year altered and ornamented; but then this great display of magnificence utterly destroys any ideas that a critical spectator may entertain of propriety, and consequently deadens the effect which dramatic compositions are calculated to have upon the passions. In a theatre where the ornaments before the curtain are glittering and grand, behind it everything must be magnificent, so that to preserve uniformity, chamber-maids are dressed in gowns of rich silk and common tradesmen's wives in robes of tissue or brocade. An alderman is represented on the stage in a dress that would be highly ornamental for a king and a tragedy queen is so loaded with ornaments that it is with difficulty she can move under them.

[This early critic thought ahead of his time and had he been living to-day Granville Barker's and Gordon Craig's new stagecraft would have appealed to him and Mr. Barker's decorative curtains as backgrounds of lines and colors appropriate to the costumes of the actors, and the outer stage at least, entirely unhampered with properties, would have soothed his mind which need have occupied itself only with the plot and the players.]

The opening doors to each box give a thorough circulation to the air exceedingly grateful to the auditors.

It will not be amiss if the painter retouches Thalia's features, for as it was, she appeared to be a Birmingham composition, whilst her pensive sister was set-off as Fancy's darling child. As no part of Mr. Godwin's much admired lecture was received with a higher relish than the Law-case, the following is offered to the consideration of the Manager of Harmony Hall.

Then follows a long story about a farmer, a bull, a

goat, and a ferry boat, which after the lapse of over a century and a quarter does not seem sufficiently interesting to insert here, although no doubt Mr. Godwin enjoyed it.

Mr. Kidd was evidently the only result of Mr. Godwin's effort to secure a support, and starting duo and following trio (Godwin, Carré, and Kidd) was probably not calculated to keep his house very full, so after the following announcements he decided to get ill until he could recruit a company. To have opened such a house as has been described, relying solely upon himself, evidenced a prodigious bump of self esteem or a blind faith that manna in the shape of a company would descend direct from heaven. For July 20, 1786, was advertized "A Concert, Lecture on Heads, and Interlude called 'The Broken Bridge,' the characters being *Maccaroni,* Mr. Godwin; *Carpenter,* Mr. Kidd; to conclude with a Dramatic Piece, Singing and Dancing." Particulars to be expressed in the bills for the day.

A local paragraph stated that "Mr. Godwin will be obliged to any Gentleman who has Mr. Foote's Works, particularly "The Devil upon Two Sticks," if he will lend or sell them." Such requests were often made of the citizens for the early plays, which were laboriously copied, part by part.

July 20 the *Columbian Herald* made this announcement: "The Concert and Entertainment advertized for this evening are, on account of the indisposition of Mr. Godwin, postponed. Timely notice will be given by Bills of the Night of Performance."

The "indisposition" terminated in a "dangerous ill-

ness" which lasted from the end of July until almost the middle of September, but during this period Mr. Godwin had got together a few raw recruits and had formed a partnership for a Dancing Academy, the advertisement of which read:

"A New Academy for Dancing will be opened on Thursday next, In Co-Partnership, By Messrs. Lafar and Godwin, where every proper Tuition will be given that necessary accomplishment."[1]

Having sufficiently recovered his health to reopen the theatre, the notice for the next performance appeared in the Charleston *Evening Gazette,* September 4, 1786:

Harmony Hall
At Louisburg, without the city,
On Tuesday Evening, September 12th,
Will be Performed,
A Grand Concert of Music
Between the Acts will be exhibited
A Variety of Heads
Selected from Stevens's Lecture.
A Prologue by Mr. Godwin,
On his first appearance after his late dangerous Illness.
Previous to the Lecture
Garrick's Country Clown by Mr. Godwin.
After the Lecture an Interlude called
"The Broken Bridge
Or the Maccaroni Traveller and
Indolent Carpenter,"
By Messrs. Godwin and Kidd
To which will be added
A Comedy in Two Acts, called
"The Old Maid"
Captain Cope by Mr. Kidd, and
Miss Harlow (the Old Maid)
by Mr. Godwin

Tickets to be had at Harmony Hall only, where Boxes may be taken. Box — 7s. Pit — 5s.

The gate fronting Boundary street will be opened at six o'clock and the Concert begin at seven.

Vivat Republica.

The criticism of this performance appeared in the next evening's paper, September 13.

[1]Charleston *Evening Gazette,* September 4, 1786.

Harmony Hall

Mr. Godwin being recovered from his late indisposition, delivered a part of Stevens's Lecture last night at Harmony Hall, with great applause. A Prologue, in which were some good parts, was well given by Mr. Godwin also Garrick's prologue to "Barbarossa." Two songs by Mr. Solomon, who had better sing new songs than old.

The Interlude called "The Broken Bridge" and that truly comic piece called "The Old Maid" constituted this evening's entertainment.

A young Gentleman made his first appearance in *Clermont* who is a very good figure and possesses a good voice but is totally unacquainted with the management of his person, a fault however that he may easily remedy.

Another gentleman appeared for the first time in *Harlow*, which part was well conceived and played so correctly that we wish to see him in characters of more importance.[1]

Captain Cope had an able representative in Mr. Kidd and Mrs. Kidd would have been unexceptionable in *Mrs. Harlow*, if her lines had been perfect.

Mr. Godwin played the Old Maid in a truly comic style. He made his *entré* in a hat of most extraordinary dimensions, affording a most excellent mirror for those ladies who have of late pursued this fashion to such excess as to render the face a secondary object of attention.

It was the piquancy of Nell Gwyn's saucy face barely visible beneath a balloon hat as big as a cart-wheel that first attracted to her the attention of the Merry Monarch — and these head coverings of prodigious size have at stated periods appealed to the feminine fancy, notwithstanding many masculine jeers.

Just at this time and after Mr. Godwin's caricature of the fashionable head-gear, appeared in the *Gazette* the following under the head of "Advertisement:" "Carried away by the sawcy Wind that Kisseth all it meets, a Lady's Balloon Hat about three feet in diameter, the crown of white silk raised fifteen inches and adorned with twenty yards of cherry colored ribbon. It ascended majestically in nearly a horizontal [sic] direction, and went over St. Michael's steeple. Who-

[1]This young man it is reasonable to believe, was Christopher Charles McGrath, a Charlestonian, who at this time made his first appearance as an actor.

ever will bring it to the forlorn owner at No. 559 King street, shall have a ..... Kiss!"

Mr. Godwin was making frantic efforts to form a Company that would be equal to his ambitions, and trying his best to induce some of the seasoned actors to come to his rescue; a paragraph, inserted no doubt by himself, in the *Evening Gazette* stated that "Mr. and Mrs. Kenna and their son and daughter are expected from Baltimore to join Mr. Godwin's Company of Comedians;" but they disappointed him, as had Mrs. Ryan, and he was forced to take on a number of untried amateurs, some of whom became professionals, however, and later on did him credit, for many of the early American amateurs became respectable actors.

On September 14, 1786, was advertized: "A New Academy for Dancing — Mr. Lafar and Mr. Godwin — Where they propose teaching Minuets, Allemands, Cotillions, Hornpipes and proper steps for Country Dances."

Theatrical distractions were drowned in the excitement of teaching the Charleston boys and girls all the newest steps and probably securing enough in fees for his daily personal expenses.

The next theatrical performance was on September 28, having been postponed from September 26, for which three announcements were made in the papers. A note after the third notice states: "The audience may depend the performance will terminate before eleven o'clock." Getting home from Boundary Street, on the outskirts of the city, with street lights far apart, was not as easy a matter as in these nights of "great white ways."

HARMONY HALL
At Louisburg, without the city,
Mr. Godwin
Most respectfully informs the friends of
Harmony Hall, Delight and Wit
That on account of new Paintings and
Necessary Improvements, the Concert of
Vocal and Instrumental Music
Is Postponed till
Tuesday Evening next, 26 inst.
Between the Acts of the Concert will
be Performed a Celebrated
Tragedy, called
"Venice Preserved"
To which will be added a Musical
Entertainment (taken from the Opera of the
Duenna), called the
Elopement
The Characters will be expressed in
Bills for the Day.
Boxes may be taken at Mr. Godwin's
No. 28 Church Street. Pit tickets 5s. 3d.

Godwin's ambition led him to the heights of presumption in announcing this great English drama with Mrs. Kidd to fill the role of *'Belvidera'* which had been one of Mrs. Siddons's most glorious triumphs.

The *Evening Gazette* of September 29 mentions one of Godwin's recruits. "A Miss Barrett lately arrived in this city made her first appearance last night at Harmony Hall in the character of *Louisa* in an entertainment called "The Elopement." Her figure is good and she promises to become an entertaining and useful actress."

This mishap was also mentioned: "Mr. Godwin had nearly met with a fatal disaster in performing *Jaffier* last night, a knife had inadvertently been put into his hand instead of a blunt dagger with which he wounded himself in the side so as to occasion an effusion of blood."

The first theatre bill showing anything resembling a

cast was printed October 5 with nine characters mentioned:

HARMONY HALL
A Concert of Music and a
Tragedy called "The Revenge," with
a Farce, "The Brave Irishman."
The Revenge.

Alonzo .....Mr. Kidd
Carlos .....Mr. Morris
Alvarez and Manuel .....Gentlemen
And Zanza .....Mr. Godwin
Isabella .....Mrs. Kidd
Leonora .....A Lady
Singing by a Gentleman.

The Brave Irishman.

Capt. O'Blunder with Songs .....Mr. Kidd
Tradewell and 1st Doctor .....Mr. Godwin
Cheatwell, Jerry, Scorrel and 2nd Doctor .....Gentlemen
Mons. Rangé .....M. Carré
Miss Lucy .....A Lady
Betty .....Mrs. Kidd

.....

The next morning in the LOST Column appeared: "Lost on Thursday night at Harmony Hall a small pocketbook containing letters, bills of lading and other papers belonging to the sloop, CONTENT, also about 231 in the paper medium. Any person delivering the pocketbook and papers to the Printers shall be rewarded with the cash that was contained in it."

The early players were prodigious workers, and the energy displayed by Godwin in his efforts to keep his curtains up were little short of marvelous, and, considering that he was working during the hot summer months in a semi-tropical city, he deserved a great deal of credit for his perseverance and ambition, his own satisfactory performances, and his untiring efforts in drilling and rehearsing a lot of amateurs.

By October tenth he had secured a few more recruits, his company then numbering ten members. The bill follows:

October 10, 1786. HARMONY HALL

This Evening
Will be Performed
A Concert of Music
Between the Acts will be presented a
Comedy, called
A Bold Stroke for a Wife
or
The Quaker Wedding

Col. Feignwell	Mr. Godwin
Periwinkle	Mr. Kidd
Sir Philip Morelove	Mr. Morris
Sackbut	Mr. Burn
Tradelove (first appearance)	Mr. Gray
Drawer	Mr. Carré
Freeman and Simon Pure	Gentlemen
Obadiah Prim	Mr. Kidd
Mrs. Prim	Mrs. Kidd
Miss Lovely	A Lady
Singing	A Gentleman

To which will be added
A Musical Entertainment called
"The Elopement"

Isaac Mendoza	Mr. Godwin
Antonio	Mr. Morris
Sancho	Mr. Carré
Carlos	Gentleman
And Don Jerome	Mr. Kidd

The Concert will begin at Seven o'clock
Boxes may be taken at Mr. Lafar's Music Shop, No. 119 Tradd street, where the box book will be kept in future, and Pit tickets sold there only.

. . . . . .

The *Evening Gazette* of October 10 made mention of one of the evening's offerings: " 'The Bold Stroke for a Wife,' which is to be performed this evening, is one of the few comedies that has stood the test of time; it is full of business and intrigue and abounding with such variety as always arrests and keeps up the attention of the audience till it ends."

Mr. Godwin by this time was feeling the need of financial assistance and it is presumed that the next performance advertized for "A Private Benefit" was for himself. The critique following the evening's entertainment goes into minute details, which are very

amusing today, but the feelings of the participants must have been lacerated in reading it the next morning.

Oct. 11 — 1786 Charleston *Evening Gazette.*

HARMONY HALL
At Louisburg, without the city
For a Private Benefit
On Tuesday Evening October 17th
Will be Performed
A Concert of Music
Between the Acts will be presented The
Historical Tragedy of
King Richard III
In Act 5th will be Introduced the
Battle of Bosworth Field, by two
Parties of Volunteer Companies,
A Gentleman from Europe will
Make his First Appearance in the
Character of King Henry:
To which will be added
A Dramatic Tale, called
"King and Miller of Mansfield."
Joe (with a Song of "How happy a State
does a Miller Possess")
by a Gentleman.

The above performance being for a private and particular purpose, Mr. Godwin has no use of Tickets for that Night.

Boxes may be taken at Mr. Lafar's where Pit tickets are sold only.

Charleston *Morning Post*, Oct. 19, 1786. THEATRICAL CRITICISM.

On Tuesday evening was performed at Harmony Hall the tragedy of Richard III in which a Gentleman made his first appearance in the character of King Henry; his figure is rather under the hero size, but he gave evident proofs that he possessed great feeling and judgment; the only exception to his performance was a redundance of action — too frequent an extension of his arms and a sort of strut across the stage which even tragedy, altho always on stilts, could not bear. A little attention will enable him to correct this vitiated style of acting. Mr. Godwin went through the arduous part of Richard with great and well earned applause. Few characters are more difficult to execute than that of the crooked tyrant, the whole strength of the piece depending upon him; on this performance the trite saying, that the "King's name is a tower of strength," was amply verified.

Two youths were brought forward in the characters of Prince Edward and the Duke of York; they were correct in their delivery, and the youngest spoke with a naiveté that is worthy of the imitation of some of the subalterns, who like Sisyphus, are always laboring in vain.

It may not be amiss to advise Miss Barrett to keep up her periods better, as it has happened the little she has been able to remember

was dealt out in such a languid unimpassioned manner, as not to be heard even by the gentlemen in the orchestra; a variation in her action and attitudes would also be well. In the scene between Richard and Lady Anne, from the inanimation of the beauteous mourner, it resembled exceedingly the story of Pygmalion who fell in love with a statue.

Owing to the smallness of the stage and a crowd behind the scenes the Battle of Bosworth's Field turned out a very la! la! performance indeed, resembling in nothing, what was done "in our great Harry's days."

Dodsley's Farce of the Miller of Mansfield followed the play and was very well relished by the audience.

The early Charleston Papers had many vicissitudes and were constantly changing management and name. The *Evening Gazette* was discontinued in October, and the remaining news and bills of Harmony Hall are to be found in the Charleston *Morning Post,* which was published on Wednesdays and Saturdays. The *Evening Gazette* was a daily paper.

October 24— Charleston *Morning Post.*

HARMONY HALL

A Concert of Music—A Comedy,
The Spanish Friar or the Discovery
Altered from Dryden's Tragi-Comedy by
David Garrick
A Prologue by Mr. Godwin.
Interlude of Singing, to which will be
added by Desire,
"The Old Maid."

. . . . . .

No comment followed this performance. The players were probably all Charleston amateurs, save Mr. Godwin and Mr. and Mrs. Kidd. Miss Barrett's name does not occur again in the bills, so she evidently did not join the company, her "good figure" not being sufficient compensation for the lack of histrionic ability.

For October 31 was advertized:

"A Concert"—King Richard III,
Singing; farce—"The Vintner Trick'd"—
and "Bucks Have At Ye All" in conclusion.

No cast or comment following.

The bill printed November 3rd for performance on November 6th was:

Concert of Music
Tragedy of Douglas, written by the Rev. Mr. Home.
The principal character by Mr. Godwin
Characters by Mr. Kidd and Mr. Morris
and the Gentleman who performed King Henry.
The part of Lady Randolph by a
Person for that night only
Anna, Mrs. Kidd.
After the Play comic dance called
The Drunken Peasant with an
Italian Hornpipe by Mr. Godwin,
Clown, Mr. Carré
To which will be added
"The Elopement"
With singing.

. . . . . .

In the *Morning Post* of November 6 a local paragraph gave the information that "On account of a hurt Mr. Godwin received in his foot the Play is deferred. Timely notice will be given of the performance."

November 8. "Positively, this Evening will be performed" — (then follows the bill printed for November 3) and the next issue of the paper, November 11, states: "A Riot took place in the Theatre on Wednesday last, owing to a disappointment which the audience received in their expectations that Mr. Godwin would dance. As the dance had been advertized for some time and no apology being made for its omission, a great part of the audience grew outrageous and threw several bottles upon the stage, one of which was returned by Mr. Godwin who also came forward and flourished his sword. A number of gentlemen jumped upon the stage, but happily several of them being cool and dispassionate, the tumult ended without any dangerous consequences."

This is the first recorded instance of any impropriety among the Charleston audiences who for over fifty

years had enjoyed theatrical performances on their own boards; but Godwin had promised more than he could perform and the early audiences did not brook disappointment, and his mediocre support left the brunt of the entertainment upon his shoulders — or rather, in this instance upon his feet, and, as one was advertized as hurt, trouble ensued.

The receipts from the Private Benefit performance were probably disappointing for the next performance was also for a "Private Benefit," and Godwin must have taxed his nimble wit to set forth such an array of novelties as should please all tastes and atone for the missing dance, as was spread upon his next bill which appeared on the morning of November 20, for the delectation of the public four days later.

The bill for December 12 was:

HARMONY HALL
For a Private Benefit
Never Performed There
On Friday Evening November 24th
A Dramatic Olio or
The Comic Mirror, Displayed
Part First, Foote's Comedy called
The Mayor of Garratt
Part Second, Select Scenes from Foote's
"Devil Upon Two Sticks."
In which the Devil will come out of a Bottle
To which will be added a
Pantomimical Entertainment, called
"The Animation and Death of Harlequin"
To Conclude with The Statue of Shakespeare and
A Grand Illumination and Transparency.

The following Songs will be introduced:
The Mulberry Tree, and Thou Soft-Flowing Avon.
Dresses, Scenes, Music and Decorations entirely new.
Boxes may be taken at Mrs. Lafar's Music Shop only.
Boxes, 7s. Pit, 5s. 3d.

Mr. Godwin's respects await the Public whose approbation and encouragement he is studious to obtain, and requests Ladies and Gentlemen who take Boxes or seats to send servants at five o'clock to keep places.

No person will be admitted by any other tickets than those signed by Mr. Lafar, as the play is performed for a private benefit.

It is presumed that Godwin's indefatigable labor to present such an elaborate performance appeased the public, whose approbation and encouragement he was so anxious to obtain, and that the late unpleasantness was forgotten, for no further mention is made of it.

HARMONY HALL
Tuesday evening, December 5th
will be presented
The Comic Mirror or All the World's a Stage
Illustrations from the following pieces:
Murphy's Comedy called The Apprentice and
The Beaux' Stratagem.
Part 2nd, Fielding's Comedy called
The Mock Doctor or the Dumb Lady Cured.
Pantomime of Animation and Death of
Harlequin
A Comic Dance called
The Drunken Peasant with an
Italian Hornpipe.
Boxes may be taken at Mr. Lafar's Music Shop and also
at Mr. Godwin's No. 7 Boundary Street.

Cupid makes his entrance upon the boards at the next performance when a "Lady assists the Manager." The Bill for December 12 was:

Tragedy written by Dr. Young called
The Revenge. N. B. The new Cast

Don Alonzo .....Mr. Kidd
Carlos .....Mr. McGrath
Alvarez .....Mr. Cockburn
And Zanga .....Mr. Godwin
Manuel .....Mr. Davis

And the part of Leonora by a Lady (a native of this city to assist the Manager)

To which will be added
The Mock Doctor.

Gregory, the Mock Doctor .....Mr. Godwin
Sir Jasper .....Mr. McGrath
Leander (with a Song) .....Mr. Cockburn
Horry .....Mr. Carré
Dorcas (with Songs) .....Mrs. Kidd

Tickets to be had at Mr. Lafar's only.

N. B. An unavoidable accident happened last Tuesday night which occasioned the performance terminating so late.

On December 13 a Local was given to the "Manager's Assistant" whose wedding must have taken place without flourish of trumpets:

"Last night Mrs. Godwin made her first appearance at Harmony Hall in the character of Leonora in the tragedy of The Revenge, and was received throughout with great applause. Fielding's farce of The Mock Doctor succeeded the Play which produced much laughter. It would not have been amiss if the pruning knife had been a little more used, the piece being written in that indelicate, coarse kind of language which has become offensive in these days of modern refinement."

On December 19 appeared the bill for the evening and two notices just below, showing real tragedy instead of its presentment.

For the Benefit of Mrs. Kidd
at Harmony Hall
On Tuesday, December 19th,
Tragedy of George Barnwell.
and Millwood by Gentleman
to assist Mrs. Kidd.
Maria, by the Lady who performed
Leonora, being her second appearance.
Between the Play and the Farce
A Song by the Gentleman who performs
Barnwell, to which will be added a
Dramatic Satire called Lethe or
Aesop in the Shades.
Mercury with Songs by the Gentleman who performs Barnwell.

December 19th. Died — Yesterday evening, Mrs. Kidd, of a consumption, the progress and fatal termination of which she bore with great fortitude and resignation.

Mr. Godwin's first and only support of the gentler sex for his earliest performances, was a real heroine at heart, whatever her accomplishments, for her death, in the midst of exacting work which must have been sorely trying to one in her condition, lifts the curtain

upon the pathos of the necessity of such a woman dying in harness.

Her husband's card is just below her death notice:

"Mr. Kidd presents his respectful compliments to those ladies and gentlemen that have taken places for 'George Barnwell,' with 'Lethe,' and begs leave to solicit a continuation of their patronage on a future evening when both those pieces will be performed, of which due notice will be previously given. Tickets delivered for the 19th Inst. will be taken."

A week later the postponed bill was given, with the following notice and the cast:

December 26 — 1786. Yesterday arrived here from the Northward Mr. and Mrs. Shakspeare, Mr. Atherton and Mr. Smith to join Mr. Godwin's Company of Performers. The Play of George Barnwell which is to be performed at Harmony Hall this evening is well adapted to the holidays when youth generally forms a considerable part of the audiences. No lesson can surely be more proper or indeed more necessary to inculcate among that valuable body of youths who are trained up to the branches of mercantile business and who often have large trusts confided to their care. In short, the play is to warn them from the rosy paths of dalliance into the straight road of rectitude, duty, etc.

A ticket therefore will be a proper present from a Master to his Clerk or Apprentice.

This Evening December 26th

George Barnwell

George Barnwell .....Mr. Godwin
Trueman .....Mr. Shakspeare
(being his first appearance here)
Uncle .....Mr. Smith
(his first appearance here)
Blunt .....Mr. Atherton
(his first appearance here)
Thorowgood .....Mr. Kidd
Maria .....The Lady who performed Leonora
Millwood .....A Gentleman (to oblige Mr. Kidd)

Lethe or Aesop in the Shades

Aesop .....Mr. Godwin
Old Man .....Mr. Atherton
Drunken Man .....Mr. Smith
Fine Gentleman .....Mr. McGrath
Taylor .....Mr. Shakspeare
Mercury (with Songs) .....Mr. Kidd
Mrs. Riot .....The Gentleman who performed Millwood.

The sympathetic and generous-hearted citizens at this time of peace and good will must have filled the house in memory of the actress whose benefit it was to have been — still may have been for her benefit, in her funeral expenses, as she had been the wife of an actor of small parts, who had no doubt a slim purse.

The season closed on the 29th of December with an old favorite and a new farce.

HARMONY HALL AT LOUISBURGH
— Without the City —
This Evening, December 29th,
Will be performed a Tragedy called
Douglas

Norval (Douglas) .....Mr. Smith
Lord Randolph .....Mr. Shakspeare
Old Norval .....Mr. Kidd
First Officer .....Mr. Atherton
Second Officer .....Mr. Carré
Peasant .....Mr. Davis
Glenalvon .....Mr. Godwin
Anna .....The Lady who performed Maria
Matilda (Lady Randolph) ....By the Person who appeared before in that character

After the Play
Comic Dance by Mr. Godwin and Mr. Carré
With an Epilogue and Leap in character of
Harlequin by Mr. Godwin.
To which will be added a new Farce
called "The Ghost."

Captain Constant .....Mr. McGrath
Sir Jeffrey Constant .....Mr. Smith
Trusty .....Mr. Kidd
Chuck .....Mr. Atherton
Roger .....Mr. Shakspeare
Belinda .....The Lady who performed Anna
Dolly .....A Lady
(being her first appearance)

Looking back upon Harmony Hall's troublous and unpropitious first season, it is rather surprising to find that its Manager was willing to undertake a second, but considering the difficulties Mr. Godwin had to overcome and the almost insuperable barriers which he had to cross, one must admire his ambition and continuity

of purpose and be somewhat lenient to the tyros in the field and acknowledge that in the performance of his own parts, many of which were long and hard, he gave perfect satisfaction. Having finally brought to his aid a few professionals, and somewhat "broken-in" his amateurs, the results of his second season of 1787 will be told in another Chapter.

As to the first season, Pepys exactly described it. "The house was better and the music better than we looked for, and the acting not much worse, because I expected as bad as could be, and I was not much mistaken, for it was so."

PERFORMANCES AT HARMONY HALL.

Season of 1786

July 11 — Concert of Music
Stevens's Lecture on Heads
Bucks Have at Ye All
Pantomimical Dance

Sept. 12 — Concert of Music
Two Prologues, one being Garrick's "Barbarossa"
Lecture on Heads

Sept. 28 — The Broken Bridge and
The Old Maid

Oct. 5 — Concert of Music
Tragedy — "The Revenge"
Farce, The Brave Irishman

Oct. 10 — Concert of Music
Comedy — A Bold Stroke for a Wife
"The Elopement"

Oct. 17 — Private Benefit
Concert of Music
Tragedy — King Richard III and
The King and the Miller of Mansfield

Oct. 24 — Concert of Music
The Spanish Friar
Interlude of Singing and (by desire)
The Old Maid

Nov. 8 — Concert of Music
Douglas
Comic Dance — The Drunken Peasant and
Italian Hornpipe
The Elopement

Nov. 24 — Private Benefit
The Comic Mirror Displayed
The Mayor of Garratt
Scenes from Devil upon Two Sticks and Pantomime
The Animation and Death of Harlequin
The Statue of Shakespeare
Illuminations and Transparencies

Nov. 28 — Concert of Vocal and Instrumental Music
Tragedy — Venice Preserved and
The Elopement

Dec. 5 — All the World's a Stage
Illustration from the Apprentice and the
Beaux' Stratagem
The Mock Doctor
Animation and Death of Harlequin
Dance — The Drunken Peasant and Italian Hornpipe

Dec. 12 — The Revenge and
The Mock Doctor

Dec. 26 — Benefit of Mrs. Kidd (who died before the performance, but given for her husband)
George Barnwell
Lethe or Aesop in the Shades

Dec. 29 — Douglas
Comic Dance with an Epilogue
Farce called The Ghost.

. . . . . .

CHAPTER VII

Harmony Hall's Second Season — 1787. Christopher Charles McGrath, Mrs. Godwin, and Other Charleston Players.

CHAPTER VII

Mr. Godwin was not born under a lucky star; and, as no one can outwit destiny, with all his ambition, wit, and patience, he was not a successful manager, but he persevered through his second Charleston season, and in 1793 was one of the managers of the Maryland Company.

So many mental qualities are essential to the correct appraisal of a play, that a manager must be something of a prophet in presenting suitable ones to his audiences so as to insure success; and keeping the stage curtain up is something of a gamble with the public, even when the cast is entirely acceptable; but with such material as Mr. Godwin could muster, everything depended upon the energy, industry, and invention of the manager, who not only performed in all the pieces, farces, pantomimes, dances, etc., but probably arranged all the scenes and situations. He personally deserves all credit, but his management was on a more ambitious scale than his picked-up-at-random company could sustain.

Mr. Christopher Charles McGrath's card announces the opening of the season of 1787:

Mr. McGrath respectfully informs his friends and the Public that His Benefit Play at Harmony Hall is fixed for the 12th of January, on which night will be presented the celebrated Tragedy of "The Countess of Salisbury," a favorite Interlude of Singing, and a Farce, with a variety of Entertainments as will be expressed at large in the Bills.

January 4 — Charleston *Morning Post*:

Tomorrow Evening
Will be presented the Comedy of
THE MISER.

Lovegold (the Miser), ...Mr. Godwin
Marianna, ...Mrs. Godwin

To which will be added "The Elopement."

— THE MISER —

Lovegold (the Miser), ...Mr. Godwin
Clermont, ...Mr. McGrath
Ramillie, ...Mr. Shakspeare
James, ...Mr. Atherton
Frederick, ...Mr. Smith
Marianna, ...Mrs. Godwin
Harriet, ...Mrs. Shakspeare
Lappet, ...

No money taken at the doors nor any person on any account admitted behind the scenes.

Vivat Republica.

The *Morning Post* was not as generous in its local paragraphs about Harmony Hall as the *Evening Gazette* had been, and, as Mr. Godwin had married him a wife and the need for money for personal expenses may have been a little more pressing, his theatrical advertisements are curtailed. Sometimes only partial casts are given, but the performances were closer together, and the next are announced four days after the above:

By Desire
On January 8th
"King Richard III"
The character of Queen Elizabeth
by a Lady from Edinburgh, being
Her First Appearance at
Harmony Hall
To which will be added the Farce
"Like Master, Like Man"
To conclude with a Song called
"The Wandering Sailor."

.....

No cast is to be found of this performance nor comment on the Lady from Scotland. The next evening's entertainment is announced for January 11:

Tragedy called THE REVENGE

Zanga, ...Mr. Smith
Alonzo, ...Mr. Kidd
Carlos, ...Mr. McGrath
Leonora, ...Mrs. Godwin
Isabella, ...Mrs. Shakspeare

To which will be added a Farce
called "The Ghost."

Roger .....Mr. Shakspeare

.....

Christopher Charles McGrath was a young Charlestonian, who, making his début as *Clermont* (as noticed in the previous chapter) became an actor of some prominence as well as an author and manager. The date of his birth has not been found. After acting at Harmony Hall the seasons of 1786-7, he seems to have followed Godwin, with whom he was associated as manager of the Maryland Company in 1793, opening a new theatre in Baltimore between Philpots and the Lower Bridge in April of that year.

McGrath wrote patriotic poetry, and it is thought by some that he wrote the words to the original "Hail, Columbia." His Miscellaneous Poems, Theatrical Pieces, etc., were printed by Thornton, Dumfries, Va., in 1796. One of his songs was addressed to Washington and Adams. For the Fourth of July, 1798, he wrote an address to the Young Men of America, which had a fine patriotic ring.

In 1796 McGrath managed a company of his own which played mainly in Virginia. His star performance was given during a three-months' season at Alexandria on the 4th of July, when was presented with great patriotic pomp and ceremony the Civic Prelude "The Fourth of July, or American Glory," introducing his composition the "Republican Song of Mount Vernon and the Land of Freedom."

Mr. McGrath's Company was in the theatrical circuit extending from York, Pennsylvania, to Yorktown, Virginia. He died in Reading, Pennsylvania, in 1799.

For January 13 was advertized:

The Comedy "A Bold Stroke for a Wife"
and the Farce
"The King and the Miller of Mansfield"
For a Private Benefit
In which Mr. Godwin is most particularly interested.
"This is the night That either makes me or undoes me quite,"
Shakspeare.

As the playbills continued, it is supposed that he received at this benefit material assistance!

Tuesday Evening, January 16
Shakspeare's Historical Play
"King Henry IV."
With the Humorous Sir John Falstaff
Including "The Life and Death of
Henry, Surnamed Hotspur."
To which will be added a new
Pantomimic Entertainment called
"The Witches or
Harlequin's Wedding."

.....

The Dramatic criticism of this production appeared in the Charleston *Morning Post* of January 17:

Shakspeare's Historical Play of "King Henry IV" was performed last night for a private benefit. The strong coloring in which the inimitable Bard has drawn most of his characters renders a correct representation exceedingly difficult; there was, however, in the play of last night more than usual equality in point of merit in the parts of *Sir John Falstaff* by Mr. Kidd, *Prince of Wales* by Mr. Godwin, and *Hotspur* by Mr. Smith.

The jolly Knight had a most able representative, every period producing loud appeals of laughter from the audience.

It will not be amiss when the play is brought forward again to provide a stump of a tree on which *Falstaff* may rest the body of *Hotspur*, during his conversation with the Prince.

A young gentleman made his first appearance in *Douglas*, his figure is good and he appears to possess a clear harmonious voice.

If animadversion produces reformation, it may not be amiss to mention the long waits between the acts.

Since the original notice of his benefit, Mr. McGrath had changed the bill, and instead of "The Countess of Salisbury" his main offering was a known favorite with Charlestonians, "The Orphan, or the Unhappy Marriage."

January 19.

For the Benefit of Mr. McGrath
Tragedy of "The Orphan, or the Unhappy Marriage"
With a favorite Interlude of Singing and Dancing by Mr. Godwin, and a new Farce called
"The Divorce, or The Irishman's Fortune."

January 19. Local Paragraph:

The play to be performed this evening for Mr. McGrath's benefit is one of the best in possession of the stage, being considered by many judicious critics as the *chef d' oeuvre* of Otway, and the "Divorce" is admirably calculated to dispel the sorrow that may be impressed on the mind by *Monimia's* sad, unmerited fate.

January 20. Charleston *Morning Post*:

A laudable inclination in the public to reward Mr. McGrath for his exertions to please, and the novelty of two ladies making their appearance in *Serena* and *Monimia* drew a very full house last night to Harmony Hall at the presentation of "The Orphan." The lady that performed *The Orphan* is a most elegant stage figure having a profile resembling the wonderful English Mrs. Siddons, and if a want of knowledge of stage business had not embarrassed her she would have given a happy specimen of great theatrical powers. The other lady ranted too much. Comedy would have been more happily suited to her smiling countenance.....

We have no means of knowing the impression that Mr. McGrath, at his first benefit, made upon the audience, for the reporter was too much engrossed with the two débutantes to give a thought to the principal actor of the evening.

Considering the study that was necessary for the high comedy and tragedy roles that Godwin was bringing forward, it is remarkable that he found so many stage-struck amateurs to come to his assistance, for these eighteenth century rôles were not easy to master, and much work was necessary even when they were not letter perfect.

January 23.

Comedy called, "The Beaux' Stratagem."
HARMONY HALL.

Archer, ...Mr. Kidd
Aimwell, ...Mr. McGrath
Sir Charles Freeman, ...Mr. Smith
Sullen, ...Mr. Atherton
Boniface, ...Mr. Shakspeare
Gibbet, ...Mr. Solomon
Honslow, ...Mr. Davis
Scrub, ...Mr. Godwin
Dorinda, ...Mrs. Godwin
Cherry, ...Mrs. Shakspeare
Mrs. Sullen, ...Miss Gordon

(being her second appearance.)
To which will be added a Farce called
"The King and Miller of Mansfield"

King, ...Mr. Smith
Dick, ...Mr. McGrath
Lord Lurewell, ...Mr. Shakspeare
Courtiers, ...Mr. Godwin, Mr. Carré, Mr. Atherton
Millers, ...Mr. Solomon and Mr. Davis
Miller (with a Song), ...Mr. Kidd
Margery, ...Miss Gordon
Peggy, ...Mr. Shakspeare
Kate, ...Mrs. Godwin

With the addition of Miss Gordon, who made her début as *Monimia* in "The Orphan" (and who resembled Mrs. Siddons), Mr. Godwin had now worked up a company of twelve, who could be called by name, and for the first time had something of a representative force in the following: Messrs Godwin, Kidd, Carré, Smith, Shakspeare, Atherton, Davies, McGrath, Solomon, Mrs. Godwin, Mrs. Shakspeare, Miss Gordon.

The plays without the casts which were announced for January 30 were "She Stoops to Conquer, or The Mistake of a Night," with "Miss in her Teens."

February 9:

For the Benefit of Mr. Carré
Comedy, "The Anatomist, or The Sham Doctor."
An Interlude of Pantomime with "The Death of Harlequin"
Dancing by Mr. Godwin and a Farce called
"Lethe, or Aesop in the Shades."

Tuesday, February 13:

Comedy, "She Stoops to Conquer," and
"Miss in her Teens."

Friday, February 16:

Shakspeare's celebrated Comedy —
"The Merchant of Venice," and The
Farce, "Divorce or Fashionable Folly".

After the play a "Dialogue Song" by Messrs. Smith and Kidd.

As the above performance is for the purpose of paying a particular demand against the Managers of Harmony Hall, no person whatever can have tickets on account.

Friday, February 16 — LOCAL:

The Merchant of Venice," a tragi-comedy by Shakspeare, for representation this evening is an admirable play. The trial scene in the Fourth Act is amazingly conducted. the introducing *Portia* and *Nerissa* in breeches, under the figured characters of Lawyer and his Clerk, was a happy thought and must ever be pleasing as it tends to show female virtue triumphing over false delicacy, by assuming the garb of a man, from motives of tender affection to a husband, who is deeply distressed at the impending cruel fate of his friend, and pleading with all his eloquence to impress in the mind of the cruel Jew the virtue of Mercy, but finding it in vain, gives a new and unexpected turn to the issue in debate.

Miss Gordon, who performs *Portia*, is an elegant figure.

There has long been a saying in Charleston that one of her early stage-struck ladies of good family, made her début here, and that her ability was so well thought of, that she went to England to study and that she became an actress of note, and having relatives in England and Scotland, remained in Europe. So far as research is concerned, this Miss Gordon seems the most likely figure to fill the bill.

February 20.

BENEFIT OF MESSRS. SMITH AND SHAKSPEARE.

SHAKSPEARE'S TRAGEDY OF ROMEO AND JUILET.

Romeo, ...Mr. Smith
Friar Lawrence and Tybalt, ...Mr. Kidd
Benvolio & Paris, ...Mr. McGrath
Capulet, ...Mr. Atherton
Prince, ...Mr. Solomon
Apothecary and Peter, ...Mr. Carré
Mercutio, ...Mr. Shakspeare
Lady Capulet, ...Mrs. Shakspeare
Nurse, ...Mrs. Godwin
Juliet, ...By a young lady, for her amusement

In Act Ist a Masquerade Dance.

End of Act 4th, the Funeral Procession of Juliet to the Monument of the Capulets and a Solemn Dirge.

The Vocal parts by Messrs. Kidd and Solomon and a Farce called

The Lying Valet

Gayless, ...Mr. Smith
Justice Guttle, ...Mr. Kidd
Beau Trippet, ...Mr. McGrath
Drunken Cork, ...Mr. Atherton
Sharp (the Valet) .....Mr. Shakspeare
Melissa, ...Mrs. Shakspeare
Kitty Pry by the .....Lady who performs Juliet

To conclude with a comic Epilogue by Mr. Godwin.

Poor Godwin was beset by foes without and within, and just as he has about formed a real company it seems in imminent danger of dissolution. He no doubt taxed every nerve and resource to keep his company together.

In the same issue of the *Post* was printed this communication from him:

HARMONY HALL, WITHOUT THE CITY.

Mr. Godwin and Company, professing the Polite Arts respectfully gives notice that Music, Dancing and Fencing are taught at Harmony Hall. Terms — One Guinea entrance, and one Guinea a month. Mr. Godwin has testimonials in his possession of having taught and conducted himself to the satisfaction of the principal families of Philadelphia, who patronized him many years ago; also a recommendation to the Rev. Wm. Smith, D. D., Provost of Washington College, Chestertown, Maryland, which, for family concerns, by marrying in this state, he has not embraced! He is impelled to this notice by the malice of a certain Busy Body (whose slanderous tongue is sharper than the sword he dare not draw) who denies Mr. Godwin's abilities without coming to a sharp trial with him. Qui capet, etc.

Godwin was very ambitious, very resourceful and had high ideals for his Company, and insisted upon the world's masterpieces for the productions of his Theatre. He gave four of Shakspeare's plays: "Richard III," "Romeo and Juliet," "The Merchant of Venice," and "Henry IV;" two of George Farquhar's best comedies —"The Constant Couple" and "The Beaux' Stratagem;" Moore's very popular "Gamester;" Garrick's

"Lying Valet," "Miss in her Teens," and "Lethe;" Dodsley's "King and the Miller of Mansfield," (based on the story of "Henry IV and the Miller;") Rowe's "Tamerlane;" Foote's "Mayor of Garratt;" Murphy's "Citizen;" Fielding's "Miser;" Mrs. Centlivre's "Bold Stroke for a Wife;" Colman's "Bucks Have at Ye All;" Dryden's "Spanish Friar;" Sheridan's "The Duenna;" Cumberland's "Fashionable Lover;" Lillo's "George Barnwell;" Macklin's "Love à la Mode;" and Young's "Revenge;" besides the most popular harlequinades of the day.

This is a formidable array for mediocre players and amateurs to have produced, and Godwin's work, in rehearsing alone, must have been stupendous. He was not willing to descend, although not equipped for his lofty desires, and he must have lavishly expended every particle of his nervous as well as physical force in trying to accomplish his ends. He truly had an indomitable spirit and deserved better success, and one can imagine his distress of mind in sending the following to the printers.

HARMONY HALL
Mr. Godwin's last night for the use
of his House; Cloaths and Scenes
during the Benefits on
Friday evening, February 23rd.
The Moral Tragedy called
"The Gamester" and a Comedy in
Three Acts called
"Lord Foppington or the Country Hoyden".

It was his performance of *Lord Foppington* that established Colley Cibber's reputation as an actor, and in his early days, as did all apprentice actors, he played for nine months without a salary. He first received ten shillings a week, and his rendering of the little part

of the *Chaplain* in Otway's "Orphan" gave him his first "raise" of five shillings; so that even though managers in 1786 found it difficult to pay the salaries of amateur actors, the amateurs at least were not required to give three-quarters of a year of their time and services for their training.

This performance was evidently postponed and friends had come to Godwin's assistance, for on February 28 appeared this card:

Mr. Godwin, impressed with gratitude, takes leave most respectfully to assure his friends and the public in general, that his constant attention to please has been attended with expenses nearly equal to the profits, having circulated in the city above five hundred pounds to merchants and different artificers.

Mr. and Mrs. Godwin's Benefit Nights will take place in the course of the month.

On March 2 was advertized:

Will be Performed
The Moral Tragedy —
"The Gamester", with an Entertainment called
"The Wrangling Lovers."

N. B.

No Outstanding tickets will be exchanged, nor any admitted but those sold for the Poor Benefit.

That he belonged in the category of the last named is evidenced by his next announcement:

For the purpose of Paying up the Salaries of
Mr. Kidd and Mr. McGrath
Will be Performed on
Wednesday Evening, March 7th,
Farquhar's Comedy "The Constant Couple, or
A Trip to the Jubilee"
To which will be added the entertainment of
"The Citizen."

Shakspearian rôles still find favor, for on March 10 appeared this notice:

Will be performed
The celebrated Tragedy of
"Romeo and Juliet"
Dancing by Mr. Godwin
And the Farce, "The Mock Doctor."
Charlotte, by the Lady who performs Juliet.

.....

This inane aversion to having the names of the ladies and gentlemen performing "for their amusement" printed on the bills may have been because it was the custom of the day not to publish an amateur's name until such person had decided to become a professional and follow the stage as a career; this has worked out in a number of cases observed by the writer.

The bill of the next performance follows:

BENEFIT OF MR. ATHERTON AND MR. SOLOMON.
Wednesday Evening, March 14th.
Tragedy called "Tamerlane
the Great, or the Fall of Bajazet",
An Interlude called
"The Handsome Lady, or
The Sailor's Return."
Songs and a Hornpipe and a
Comic Opera, called "Flora, or
Hob in the Well."
The Play will open with Mr. Garrick's admired
Clown's Prologue, by
Mr. Smith.

Nine days later this notice appeared:

For a Private Benefit
March 23rd
The Moral Tragedy of "The Gamester"
and the Ballad-Farce called
"Flora, or Hob in the Well."

As his name does not appear later, this was probably Mr. Godwin's Benefit, and Mrs. Godwin's was four days after.

"Flora, or Hob in the Well" was always a drawing card for Charleston audiences, and this fanciful little ballad-opera with *Hob,* the fairy or sprite in the Well, was one of Colley Cibber's favorite musical pieces, and was the first opera given in America during Charleston's first season in 1735.

HARMONY HALL
Mrs. Godwin's Night
March 27th

Tragedy of "The Countess of Salisbury"
A Comic Dance called
"The Miller's Songs," by Mr. Atherton
and Mr. Solomon
Epilogue by Mr. Godwin, "Riding on an Ass," and
"Miss in Her Teens."

Any unusual or grotesque incident that could be added to the regular bills to give one more grain of spice was eagerly appropriated by the manager. The epilogue, "Riding on an Ass," was an old thriller, having been used by the original Hallam in one of his earliest performances, and it was always received with thunders of applause by "the laughter-loving sons of glee," or the gallery-gods.

After Christopher Charles McGrath, Mrs. Godwin, the Manager's second wife, was his most successful amateur turned professional. During her first two seasons at Harmony Hall she filled the rôles of *Maria* in "George Barnwell"; *Anna* in "Douglas"; *Leonora* in "The Revenge"; *Marianna* in "The Miser"; *Dorinda* in "The Beaux' Stratagem"; *Mrs. Beverly* in "The Gamester"; *Ella* in "The Countess of Salisbury"; *Lady Jonquil* in "Tony Lumpkin in Town"; *Kate* in "The Miller of Mansfield," and probably other rôles in plays where casts were missing. So, considering her hard work and accomplishments, her following card is very modest:

March 27: "Mrs. Godwin presents her most respectful compliments to the ladies and gentlemen of Charleston and solicits their patronage on this occasion, resting her humble hope of a good Benefit on her being a native of this city; not on any theatrical merit."

On the night of her début it was stated in the press that her performance was received throughout with

"great applause," so this praise may have been considered sufficient, for no further mention is made of the performances at Harmony Hall, save the last plays announced for the next day:

March 28th.

HARMONY HALL
The Last Time
For the Benefit of the Lady who performed
Juliet.
Comedy of "The West Indian."
Dancing by Mr. Godwin
Song by the Lady who performed
Charlotte Rusport
To which will be added a Farce
"Tony Lumpkin in Town."

After the close of the theatrical season, Mr. Godwin, under a pretended "Act of the Legislature," which the Statutes at Large do not contain, disbanded the Company he could no longer hold together, and two days later he announced his new line of lectureship at Harmony Hall:

March 30th, 1787.— By Permission
Tolerated throughout the State with
universal approbation
Harmony Hall

Mr. Godwin having (in consequence of a late Act of the Legislature) relinquished Theatrical Representations, most respectfully acquaints his friends and those ladies and gentlemen who have kindly patronized him that he will begin his new line of
Lectureship on May 1st
With a Splendid set of Portraits, large as life in Transparent Painting, Consisting of the following Worthies:
Hancock, Adams, Ward, Hopkins, Ellery, Rutledge, Greene, Putnam, Gates, Wayne, Lincoln, Laurens, and Washington.

Eulogiums on each Worthy will be delivered by Mr. Godwin, Selected from Dr. Ladd's Poem of his Prospect of America.
Music adapted to the subject.

Tickets at 5S. each to be had at
Franklin's Head, No. 31 Bay, where Boxes may be taken.

No less a worthy than Charles Wilson Peale inaugurated this form of entertainment in America in his Museum in Philadelphia, and his portraits were shown

and the characteristics of the originals made into a lecture with music, and sometimes readings between his "acts."

The last notice of Mr. Godwin during his Charleston career was in the Charleston *Morning Post*:

For the Benefit of Mr. Godwin
At Harmony Hall
Tuesday Evening, June 19th
Will be exhibited
A Moral, Serious, Comic and Satirical
"Lecture on Heads"
In Three Parts
To Conclude with a Splendid
Set of Thirteen Portraits.

.....

Seilhamer says that Godwin was the most complete representative of the strolling player and manager that was ever on this continent; that he made his first appearance on the stage at the Southwark in Philadelphia, as *Prince Edward* in "Richard III," in 1766. He soon after left the American Company and became one of the leading spirits in the "New American Company," which played at Annapolis in 1769. He rejoined the American Company in Jamaica during the Revolutionary War. There his first wife made her début, and in 1779 in Hallam's production of "Douglas," followed by "The Citizen" at the Jamaica Theatre, Godwin danced "The Drunken Peasant" between the play and the farce.

In 1785 Godwin and Kidd opened the first theatre in Savannah, Georgia; and, in 1786, through the assistance of a citizen, built Harmony Hall in the suburbs of Charleston, and played there two seasons, ending March 28, 1787.

At the Northern Liberties, Philadelphia, Mr. Godwin in the season of 1792 played *Jaffier* in "Venice Pre-

served;" *Old Philpot* in "The Citizen." He played also *Lovegold* in "The Miser;" *Chamont* in "The Orphan;" *Mr. Wandercrab* in "The New Peerage;" *Isaac Mendoza* in "The Duenna;" *Sharp* in "The Lying Valet;" *Prattle* in "The Deuce Is in Him;" and the *Old Man* and the *Drunken Man* in "Lethe," and then gave his "Lecture on Heads."

In 1793 Godwin and McGrath opened a new theatre in Baltimore, and Godwin came again to Charleston in the summer of 1795, and played a few times at the City Theatre, after which he seems to have disappeared from stage life.

Harmony Hall seems to have been turned into a sort of Vauxhall, and advertisements are noticed in the papers for stray plays there now and then through 1790.

The Broad-Street Theatre was opened in 1793 and the City Theatre 1794, and probably no more plays were given there, but the building was still used for various purposes as late as 1825 and after, as shown by an advertisement in the Charleston *Mercury*, Saturday, December 10, 1825:

"The members of the 'Free and Easy' are requested to meet this evening the 10th inst. at their Club Room No. 77, Harmony Hall, Meeting St."

The city streets had now been extended to Harmony Hall, which was no longer "Without the Gates."

PERFORMANCES AT HARMONY HALL

— SEASON 1787 —

Jan. 4 — The Miser, ... Fielding
The Elopement, (arranged from the "Duenna") . Sheridan

8 — King Richard III, ... Cibber's version
Like Master Like Man,

10 — The Orphan, ... Otway
Divorce, ... Jackman
(Mr. McGrath's Benefit)

13 — A Bold Stroke for a Wife, ...Mrs. Centlivre
The King and the Miller of Mansfield,.....Dodsley
(Private Benefit)
16 — King Henry IV, ...Shakspeare
The Witches or Harlequin's Wedding, ...Love
Jan. 23 — The Beaux' Stratagem, ...Farquhar
King and Miller of Mansfield, ...Dodsley
Feb. 9 — The Anatomist or the Sham Doctor, ...Ravenscroft
The Death of Harlequin, and Lethe, ...Garrick
(M. Carré's Benefit)
13 — She Stoops to Conquer, ...Goldsmith
Miss in her Teens, ...Garrick
16 — The Merchant of Venice, ...Shakspeare
Divorce, ...Jackman
20 — Romeo and Juliet, ...Shakspeare
The Lying Valet, ...Garrick
(Benefit Messrs. Smith and Shakspeare)
Mar. 2 — The Gamester, ...Moore
The Wrangling Lovers,
(Poor Benefit)
7 — The Constant Couple, ...Farquhar
The Citizen, ...Murphy
(To pay salaries for Kidd and McGrath)
10 — Romeo and Juliet, ...Shakspeare
The Mock Doctor, ...Fielding
14 — Tamerlane, ...Rowe
Flora or Hob in the Well, ...Cibber
(Benefit Mr. Atherton and Mr. Solomon)
23 — The Gamester, ...Moore
Flora or Hob in the Well, ...Cibber
(Private Benefit)
27 — The Countess of Salisbury, ...Hartson
Miss in her Teens, ...Garrick
(Mrs. Godwin's Benefit)
28 — The West Indian, ...Cumberland
Tony Lumpkin in Town, ...O'Keefe
(Benefit of Lady who played Juliet)

Before closing this chapter, a few stray announcements of matters theatrical will be included for 1789 and 1790. April 21, 1789, The City *Gazette and Daily Advertizer,* contained this announcement:

This Evening at the Great Room in Tradd Street,
(Late Williams' Coffee House)
Will be Performed
An Olio
Consisting of various parts by
Mrs. Robinson and Miss Wall.
To begin at Seven o'clock.

These were the mysterious Mrs. Robinson, and Mr. Thomas Wall's daughter. No press notice appears of the entertainment, but the audience was probably sufficiently large to ensure interest in a second performance, for on April 28 appeared the following:

At the Great Room in Tradd Street
A Divertissement
Selections
Il Penseroso; Jane Shore; and Alicia —
Songs
Selections
L'Allegro; Archer; Boniface; Foigard:
Scrub, Sullen, Mrs. Sullen, Dorinda, and Cherry.
Song
"Come Live with Me and Be my Love."

Mrs. Robinson gave the recitations and Miss Wall the songs. After this date the Library's files of the *Gazette* and *Daily Advertiser* for 1789 are missing, but the season must have been successful for on January 9, 1790, they were again in Charleston.

During their opening week, April, 1789, there were two rivals in the entertainment field, both using the "Great Room in Tradd Street" — alternately with Robinson and Wall, as shown below:

Performing in the Great Room in Tradd Street
Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays,
Mr. Williman, lately arrived from Ausburg in Germany,
Exhibits many Curious Exercises by Living Birds
As performed before the Emperor of Germany;
his most Christian Majesty, Lewis XVIth, and
other European Courts.

The other rival was this lady:

Mrs. Gardner
Late of the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden,
At Mr. McCrady's Long Room
A Concert of Vocal and Instrumental Music,
with Entertainments
Admittance — 5 s.

Mrs. Gardner begs leave to assure the public that the room will be brilliantly illuminated with wax lights.

Mrs. Gardner was, in her day, a distinguished actress, playing the heroine in most of the productions of the Haymarket when Foote was manager there.

The missing numbers of the City *Gazette* might have given other glimpses of dramatic and musical *divertissements,* but these at least show that between the closing of Harmony Hall as a Theatre and the opening of the Charleston Theatre there were flashes here and there.

In the final notices of Harmony Hall, January 7, 8, and 9, 1790, appeared the following:

This Evening
At the Lecture Room
Late Harmony Hall
Will be a Concert
Between the Parts will be Rehearsed
Gratis, the musical piece of
"Thomas and Sally;"
To which will be added a Pantomime called
"Columbia, or Harlequin Shipwrecked."
Maria's Evening Song to the Virgin by
Miss Wall.

Mrs. Robinson and Miss Wall beg leave respectfully to apologize to the Public for having postponed the amusement intended for Saturday night last, and assure them that due care shall be taken in future to begin at 7 o'clock. Tickets to be had at McCrady's Tavern, Singleton's Bar, and at the Printing Office.

It would appear from the wording of this notice that these ladies must have been performing here some time before. As the *Gazettes* are missing from the end of April to January 7, 1790, there is no way of ascertaining if Mrs. Robinson and Miss Wall continued performing in Charleston from April, nor when they left the Great Room in Tradd Street for Harmony Hall; and, as papers are also missing from the 7th to the 23d of January, the performances between these dates are lost.

"The Famous Saxon" had arrived by the 23d with

his "Wonderful feats of Horsemanship," and in Robinson and Walls' last announcement his performances were one of the features:

January 23, 1790. HARMONY HALL

A Concert of Music
During the Parts of which
"The Famous Saxon" will have the

Honor to give a representation of a dance upon a wire, on which he will execute several feats of strength, etc. Tickets to be had at the City Gazette and Columbian Herald Printing Offices, and at Mr. McCrady's Tavern.

"The Famous Saxon's" performances on his own account were given at 'Mr. McCrady's on the Bay," and the Charlestonians, as they dearly loved fine horses and expert horsemanship, furnished him good audiences for almost three months.

CHAPTER VIII

The Charleston Theatre
1793
First Season under West and Bignall.
Featuring Mrs. West in Tragedy and
Mrs. Bignall in Comedy
And introducing to Charleston
Mr. Chambers of the Theatre Royal
Haymarket, and
Miss Charlotte Sully to whom he was married in this
City at the end of the Season.
Benefit for the Orphan-House £306, 13s, 3d

THE CHARLESTON THEATRE, OPENED IN 1793

CHAPTER VIII

"The triumph of Peace over War" was how Charles Fraser, in his "Reminiscences of Charleston," described the laying of the cornerstone of the Orphan House in 1792, when the Rev. Dr. Smith and Mr. John Huger, the Intendant, stood on the slope of the old ramparts to lay the foundation of an asylum for the destitute orphans for all time to come.

This was a block and a half west from Harmony Hall, on Boundary Street, and between the two buildings was a general parade ground for the Charleston militia, and here, near "Tobacco Inspection," General William Washington (cousin of George and an honored Charlestonian) reviewed the troops.

Five years had passed since the closing of Harmony Hall when another theatre was opened February 11, 1793.

In the *New York Magazine,* September, 1792, appears a letter from Charleston, S. C., of the date of August 18, as follows:

On Tuesday last the ground was laid off for the new theatre on Savage's Green. The cornerstone of the foundation is to be laid the 20th inst. The dimensions, we are informed, are as follows: — 125 feet in length, the width 56 feet, the height 37 feet; with an handsome pediment, stone ornaments, a large flight of stone steps and a court yard palisaded. The front will be in Broad Street and the pit entrance in Middleton street. The different offices will be calculated so as not to interfere with each other; the stage is to be 56 feet in length, the front circular, with three rows of patent lamps; the boxes will be constructed so that small parties may be accommodated with a single box; to every box there will be a window and a venetian blind; three tiers of boxes decorated with 32 columns; to each column a glass chandelier with five lights; the lower tier balustraded; the middle and upper boxes paneled; fancy paintings, the ground French white, the mouldings and projections silvered; in the ceiling there will be three ventilators. The frontispiece, balconies and stage doors will be similar to those of the opera-house, London. The theatre is to be built under the im-

mediate direction of Mr. West. When it is considered that this gentleman has had near thirty years experience in many of the first theatres in England; that he is to be assisted by artists of the first class, Captain Toomer and Mr. Hobam, we may expect a theatre in a style of elegance and novelty. Every attention will be paid to blend beauty with conveniency, and to render it the first theatre on the continent. The contractors have engaged to complete the building by the tenth of January next.

This new theatre was far removed from Harmony Hall, being in one of the favored localities down town near the residential section. "Savage's Green, upon which it was built, was at the lower end of Broad Street and was used for military exercises, the old battalions parading there, and the Green was separated from Tradd Street by marsh lands." ("My Reminiscences of Charleston", Charles Fraser.)

The press notices of events theatrical leading up to the opening of the theatre need no added comment:

January 4, 1793. CITY GAZETTE AND DAILY ADVERTISER.

NEW THEATRE

A meeting of the subscribers to the new theatre is particularly requested at 12 o'clock on Monday next at Williams's Coffee House.

January 9, NEW THEATRE

At a meeting of the subscribers held the 7th instant, it was agreed to, with the consent of Mr. West, that the subscription to the theatre be enlarged six shares, and that the original holders of half shares be at liberty to make them whole shares so far as shall amount to six shares, provided they do so by Monday the 14th instant. The preference will be given to those who apply first and pay one half at the time of subscribing.

S. Beekman.

January 24, 1793.

On Tuesday last Messrs. West and Bignall's company of Comedians arrived here in the brig *Two Sisters*, Capt. Trent, from Richmond, viz: — Mrs. West, Mr. and Mrs. Bignall, Mr. and Mrs. Kedey, Mr. and Mrs. Decker, Mr. and Mrs. Sheldon, Miss Sully, Miss E. Sully, Miss H. West, Mr. J. Bignall, Mr. Kenna, Mr. Courtney, Mr. West, Jun., Mr. Andrews, Mr. Riffetts, M. Gollier, Mons. Lacot.

NEW THEATRE

February 1st.

The subscribers to Messrs. West and Bignall's theatre have notice that the third payment will be due the sixth of February next. The Treasurer's receipts showing this notice to have been complied with will entitle them to their tickets of admission, etc.

January 29th, THEATRE

West & Bignall
Inform the ladies and gentlemen of Charleston and its vicinity, the theatre will be positively opened
On Monday, February 11th.
With the admired Comic Opera of "The Highland Reel"
Mrs. Inchbald's laughable Farce,
"The Adventures of a Shawl," and a
Prologue by Mr. Bignall.

As every exertion is absolutely necessary for the completion of the building at the time specified above, it is humbly requested no ladies or gentlemen will be offended if admittance cannot be granted after Wednesday the 30th January, as it impedes in an especial manner the alacrity necessary on the part of the mechanics.

February 7. BY AUTHORITY

Charleston Theatre
West & Bignall's Company
Will Perform
On Monday, February 11th, 1793,
O'Keefe's celebrated Comic Opera

(As presented at the Theatre-Royal, Covent Garden, upwards of two hundred nights, with the most distinguished applause)

"The
Highland Reel"

The Overture, etc. composed and compiled by
Wilbain Shield, Esq.

Old McGilpin, ...Mr. J. Kenna
Sergeant Jack, ...Mr. West
Sandy, ...Mr. Courtney
Charley, ...Mr. J. Bignall
Capt. Dash, ...Mr. Kedey
Croudie, ...Mr. Hamilton
Laird of Racey, ...Mr. Dunham
Laird Donald, ...Mr. Andrews
Benin, ...Mr. Rifferts
And Shelty, (the laughing piper) .....Mr. Bignall
Jenny, ...Mrs. Decker
And Miss Moggy McGilpin,
(the little Highland soldier) .....Mrs. Bignall

Preceding the Opera
An Occasional Prologue by Mr. Bignall,
To which will be added

Mrs. Inchbald's laughable Farce
"The Adventures of a Shawl
Or Appearance is against them."

Mr. Walmsley, ...Mr. Hamilton
Lord Lighthead, ...Mr. Courtney
Mr. Clownley, ...Mr. J. Bignall
Thomson, ...Mr. Dunham
Servant to Lord Lighthead, ...Mr. Andrews
Servant to Lady Mary, ...Mr. Rifferts
And Humphrey, ...Mr. Bignall
Lady May Magpie, ...Mrs. Kedey
Lady Loveall, ...Mrs Decker
Miss Angle, ...Miss Sully (Charlotte)
Miss Audley, ...Miss E. Sully (Elizabeth)
And Fish, ...Mrs. Bignall

Boxes 6s. Upper Boxes 6s. Pit 5s. Gallery 3s. 6d. Doors to be opened at Five and the curtain to rise precisely at half past six o'clock.

No admittance behind the scenes.

February 12, "The Highland Reel" was repeated and the farce changed to Mrs. Inchbald's Farce, "The Widow's Vow, or Second Thoughts are Best."

February 7. The subscriber, having rented the apartments in the Charleston Theatre appropriated for the accommodation of the Company, with refreshments between the acts, begs leave to inform the ladies and gentlemen that fruit, liquors, etc., will be procured of the most genuine and first qualities; proper servants also will attend the seats with fruit, and every exertion will be made to give satisfaction to the ladies and gentlemen who may please to favor their most obedient and very humble servant,

John Love.

OCCASIONAL PROLOGUE

Spoken by Mr. Bignall, at opening the New Theatre, Charleston, on Monday, February 11, 1793.

Vast is the writer and the actor's plan
Truth is their object, and their subject man:
They aim (by reason's laws alone confin'd)
To please the fancy and improve the mind;
By virtues, precepts, passion to control,
Genius exalt, and dignify the soul;
Hypocrisy, by ridicule expose;
Exhibit avarice, with all its woes;
The Gay coquette through all her mazes trace;
The prude involve in merited disgrace;
And in their genuine colours, justly show
The Clown, the rake, the bully and the beau.
The theatre has ever been design'd

The guide of life, the guardian of the mind;
It shows us what we are,—and we may see
By what it tells us, what we ought to be.
Indecent ribaldry the stage has fled,
And hides in vulgar haunts, its hated head.
Now elocution all its power displays,
Now virtue leads us through a pleasing maze;
To skill, to genius, to industry and art,
The friend of truth, the guardian of the heart.
We then (your servants) our route pursue,
To teach good manners and sound morals too;
With reason, sense, and justice as our guide,
Your cheers to join — our first, our greatest pride:
Soothe all to peace, by various woes perplex'd;
And from the page of Shakspeare draw our text;
This night, altho' appall'd by hidden but soft rocks,
We've launch'd a new-built vessel from the stocks;
Fair, tight and clean — with care and cost she's made;
A good and safe conveyance for our trade;
From reg'lar ships our officers are cull'd;
Our sailors veterans — skillful, stout and bold;
Thus we've embarked on this theatric main,
Our all on board — each phantom gives us pain;
The smallest murmurs thunder in our ears;
And every hiss a hurricane appears —
With fear and dread we lightning's blast espy,
While meteors blaze in every critic's eye;
But, spite of all these terrors, still some hopes we view,
Hopes ne'er can fail us since they're plac'd in YOU.
Your breath the gale; — our voyage is secure.
And good the venture which your smiles insure;
Since by your bounty we shall spread each sail —
By you supported, we can fear no gale;
We safely, then, the light-house make from far —
Your smiles are pilots — take us o'er the bar.
Then, our invoice seen, we humbly court
Your kind applause to waft us into port;
If with your plaudits blest, our dangers o'er
Our anchor's cast, and we are safe on shore.

Feb. 13, 1793. Monday evening the New Theatre was opened with "The Highland Reel" and "Appearance is Against Them." Whilst we express our approbation of the zeal and activity exerted by the managers, in the rapid erection and fitting up this theatre—we must at the same time pay a just tribute of applause to the liberality and the taste evinced by them in the scenery, decorations and embellishments; which, however they may be exceeded by gaudy glitter, can nowhere be surpassed in neatness and simple elegance. The curtain rose at the appointed hour, to a very numerous and genteel audience, when Mr. Bignall delivered an occasional prologue with the nicest discrimination and appropriate feelings.

The opera was well cast and the principal parts performed with a spirit and truth of colouring, which affords a pleasing presage of the elegant and refined enjoyment our citizens are likely to experience by an attendance on this most rational amusement.....

Mr. West, in *Sergeant Jack*, finely portrayed this artful and designing son of Mars with a boldness and fancy which threw additional consequence on the character. *Old McGilpin*, with all his unfeelingness of heart, his avarice, pride and ambition, was justly personified by Mr. Kenna.

Mr. Bignall was everything that the author could wish in *Shelty*; he gave this character with such original and native humor that the house was literally in a continued roar of mirth and hilarity.

Mrs. Bignall, in *Miss Moggy McGilpin*, displayed such comic powers, gaiety and naiveté, that we may safely pronounce her "the Jordan of America;" and doubt not she will ever experience a continuance of that public approbation and applause, which she so deservedly received on her first appearance.

"The Highland Reel," like most of Mr. O'Keefe's productions, is wild and eccentric, and not to be judged by the strict rules of the drama.

Indeed the performance throughout, was received with unbounded applause and the loudest plaudits.

* * * * * * * * * * * *

The new theatrical season, 1793, was fairly launched. Fraser says of it: "I can never forget the delight which this amusement produced in all classes of our community. The box-office was thronged of a morning and on the evening of representation the doors of the Theatre were besieged by crowds long before the hour of opening them. The stage was the general subject of conversation; and so enchanting was its influence, that the ladies were heard to say that 'they could live in the theatre'"— a happy augury for a successful season.

February 13.

BY AUTHORITY
Charleston Theatre
West and Bignall's Company
Will perform
This evening, February 13th,
Miss Hannah More's Tragedy of
PERCY,
Or, the Fatal Cheviot Chase;
"To drive the deer with hound and horn,

Earl Percy took his way;
The child may rue that is unborn
The hunting of the day."

Chevy Chase.

Percy (Earl of Northumberland), ...Mr. Bignall
Earl Raby, ...Mr. West
Edric, ...Mr. Courtney
Sir Hubert, ...Mr. Andrews
Harcourt, ...Mr. Sweeney
Knights, ...Messrs. J. Bignall & Kedey
and Earl Douglas, ...Mr. J. Kenna
Bertha, ...Miss E. Sully
And, Elvina, ...Mrs. West

A Song, by Mrs. Decker
To which will be added
The Musical Entertainment of
Or Love in a City."
"The Romp,

Watty Cockney, ...Mr. Bignall
Capt. Sightly, ...Mr. Courtney
Old Cockney, ...Mr. Riffets
Servant, ...Mr. Andrews
And, Old Barnacle, ...Mr. J. Kenna
Miss La Blonde, ...Miss Sully
Penelope, ...Miss E. Sully
And, Prissy Tomboy,
(the Romp), ...Mrs. Bignall

Tickets to be had at Mr. Muirhead's Bookstore, the Post-Office, Mr. Williams's Coffee-House, Mr. Harris's Tavern, Mr. Young's Book-store, at the office of the Theatre, and at Messrs. Markland and McIver's Printing-office.

Boxes — 5/10 — Upper Boxes Pit 5s.
Gallery 3s. 6d.

No money taken at the door. Doors to be opened at five, and the curtain to rise precisely at half past six o'clock.

No admittance behind the scenes.

On the afternoon of the 13th the Races entered the field — the *Gazette* announcing that at the Washington Course the following horses started for the first Jockey Club purse; three heats, four miles; viz: Col. Washington's Rosetta; Mr. Burns' Paragon; Mr. Fenwick's Pantaloon; and Col. Ashe's Mercury. Col. Washington's Rosetta won the purse.

St. Valentine's Day found the Races in full swing, the Theatre crowded, and joy triumphant everywhere,

for of all gay times in Charleston Race Week was the gayest. Everything wore a holiday air; pupils were dismissed from the schools, and the road to the Race-Track (bearing with it none of the odium of the present day) was thronged with happy people of all classes. Racing was then a gentleman's sport, and the enthusiasts of the turf and their friends of the Jockey Club made a merry company. "Clergymen thought it no impropriety to see a well-contested race and the Race Ball, given by the Jockey Club, was always the most splendid of the season."

The Course itself palpitated with pleasure — the fine animals, the gaily bedecked jockeys, the owners of the horses in top boots and white buckskin breeches — and just outside, the luxurious, if cumbersome, coaches, painted in deep rich colors with gilding and armorial bearings, from which stepped forth visions of loveliness, in their mothers, wives, daughters and sweethearts — all radiant in their English finery to honor the occasion.

The Theatre's Valentine Offerings were Murphy's Comedy "Know Your Own Mind," and the comic opera of "The Quaker, or May-Day Dower."

The reporters were probably too much engrossed with the races to think of the theatre, so they made no comment on these performances, but there was a short paragraph concerning the Concert by the Professors and amateurs of Music for the benefit of the Orphan House, stating that Mrs. Decker and Mr. Courtney had given their services in this laudable undertaking:

February 14.

COMEDY

"Know your Own Mind," by Arthur Murphy.

Millamour, ...Mr. Bignall
Old Bygrove, ...Mr. Hamilton
Melville, ...Mr. Courtney
Capt. Bygrove, ...Mr. Kedey
Sir Harry Lovewit, ...Mr. J. Bignall
Sir John Millamour, ...Mr. Andrews
Charles, ...Mr. J. Kenna
Robert, ...Mr. Riffets
And, Dashwarld, ...Mr. West
Miss Neville, ...Mrs. Bignall
Lady Jane, ...Miss Sully
Mrs. Bramley, ...Mrs. Decker
Madam La Rogue, ...Mrs. Kedey
And, Lady Bell, ...Mrs. West

"Lash'd to the Helm," by Mr. Courtney
to which will be added
The Comic Opera of
"The Quaker,
Or May-Day Dower."

Steady (the Quaker), ...Mr. West
Solomon (his man), ...Mr. Bignall
Farmer Easy, ...Mr. Riffets
Clodpole, ...Mr. Bignall, jun.
Cudden, ...Mr. Andrews
And, Lubin Blackthorn, ...Mr. Kenna
Gillian, ...Mrs. Bignall
Cicely, ...Mrs. Kedey
And, Floretta, ...Miss Sully

There is so much original copy for this chapter that it needs hardly more than to be held together to give a full account of the season's proceedings, just as they were viewed in the press by those who participated in them, and it is hoped that in this form they will prove acceptable to present-day readers.

February 15.

The Rev. Mr. Horne's Celebrated Tragedy of
"Douglas,
Or The Noble Shepherd"

Norval Douglas, ...Mr. Bignall
Glenalvon, ...Mr. Kedey
Lord Randolph, ...Mr. Courtney
Officers, ...Messrs. Andrews, Riffets and Sweeney
Servant, ...Mr. Dunham
And, Old Norval, ...Mr. J. Kenna
Anna, ...Mrs. Kedey
And, Matilda (Lady Randolph) .....Mrs. West

"The Race Horse," a song by Mr. West
To which will be added,
O'Keefe's Comic Opera of
"The Farmer,
Or The World's Ups and Downs"
(With the original Overture)

Farmer Blackberry, ...Mr. Hamilton
Capt. Valentine, ...Mr. Courtney
Rundy, ...Mr. J. Bignall
Col. Dormant, ...Mr. Andrews
Fairly, ...Mr. Riffets
Counsellor Flummerry, ...Mr. Kedey
Farmer Stubble, ...Mr. Dunham
Waiter, ...Mr. Sweeney
And, Jimmy Jumps
(the macarony stay-maker) .....Mr. Bignall
Molly Maybush, ...Miss Sully
Louisa, ...Mrs. Decker
Landlady, ...Mrs. Kedey
And, Betty Blackberry, ...Mrs. Bignall

February 18. This evening will be presented a new Play called "Such Things Are, or The Christian Sultan." This much admired play by Mrs. Inchbald is superior to any piece she has yet wrote, and to the best modern comedies. The character of the philanthropic Howard (for whom so many societies all over the world are named to-day) the widow speaks his charities — the orphan lisps his bounties, and the rough, fierce Indian melts in tears to bless him.

February 19.

A Correspondent's respects to Messrs. West & Bignall and assures them that if they will oblige the citizens with the play called "The Bankrupt" and the farce called the "Insolvent Act," that he will assure them the fullest house they have had this season.

February 20. —

"Isabella, or the Fatal Marriage"
In Act 2nd a favorite duet by
Mrs. Decker and Miss Sully;
End of Act 2nd, a favorite song,
"No, indeed, not I," by Mrs. Bignall;
and the farce of three acts (never performed here) called
"The Pannel or Masked Apparition"

As performed at Drury Lane upwards of one hundred nights, with distinguished applause. Days of performing —
Monday, Wednesday, and Friday.

February 20. —

West & Bignall present their respectful compliments to the ladies and gentlemen of Charleston, take liberty to inform them that they have appointed a Box-bookkeeper, for the purpose of letting the boxes.

Mr. Fitzsimons will attend this business at the theatre from ten o'clock in the morning until noon, and from two to four in the afternoon of each day.

The boxes will all be particularly labeled and tickets printed with the respective names of the different boxes, so that parties may be accommodated with any number of tickets, not less than ten for a specific box, unless the tickets for that box shall have been previously disposed of.

The box-keeper will attend from the opening of the theatre each evening with the key of the boxes properly labeled, with the names of the boxes to which they individually belong. West and Bignall beg leave to add that as the general accommodation and eventual convenience of their generous and liberal patrons and benefactors, is ever their first and fixed object, they humbly hope no lady or gentleman will take offence at their strict adherence to a regulation, which they trust will be found highly conducive to the quiet and decorum of the audience.

At the performance of "A School for Soldiers, or the Deserters" the gruesomeness of the last scene is all set forth alluringly to attract a mourning audience — "The Field-Procession to the execution, muffled drum and fife, Coffin carried on a trestle by four soldiers, Regimental band playing the Dead March in Saul — Officers resting on their arms and soldiers to execute the sentence. At the end of Act 3, 'The Tobacco Box or Soldier's Pledge of Love' a favorite dialogue by Mr. West and Mrs. Bignall."

The next evening of performance was February 25, when Major Tyler's Comedy, "The Contrast", was played, followed by "Love in a Village." The cast of this may be of interest as there is a new performer to make her bow. "The Contrast," the Comedy written by Royall Tyler, was the first American play to meet with a favorable reception. The John-Street Theatre in New York introduced it to the public in 1787, and it had five successive presentations, which, at a time before "long runs" were established, spoke for its popularity.

In "The Contrast" Mr. Tyler shows up the fashions

and foibles of New York's gay set before they had a "Four Hundred." It was played in New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Charleston.

By Authority

Charleston Theatre

On Monday Evening — February 25th,
Will be presented a Comedy (never performed here)
called
"The Contrast, or The American Son of Liberty"
(written by Major Tyler, a citizen of the United States)

Col. Manly, ...Mr. J. Kenna
Billy Dimple, ...Mr. J. Bignall
Old Vanrough, ...Mr. Andrews
Jessamy, ...Mr. Courtney
Thonida, ...Mr. Riffets
And, Jonathan (with the Song of "Yankee Doodle") ....Mr. Bignall
Maria (with the Indian Death Song), ...Mrs. Bignall
Letitia, ...Mrs. Decker
And, Charlotte, ...Mrs. West

To which will be added
The Comic Opera of
"Rosina, or Love in a Village,"

Belville, ...Mr. J. Kenna
Capt. Belville, ...Mr. Courtney
Rustic, ...Mr. J. Bignall
Irishmen, ...Messrs. Andrews & Riffets
And, Williams, ...Mr. Bignall
Rosina (being her first appearance), ...Mrs. Grey
Dorcas, ...Mrs. Oliphant
And, Phoebe, ...Mrs. Bignall

Days of Performing, Monday, Wednesday, and Friday.
Boxes 5/10 — Upper Boxes do. — Pit 5s. — Gallery, 3s. 6d.

By Authority
This Evening, 6th inst. (March)
Will be presented
Mrs. Cowley's favorite Comedy (never performed here)
called "The
Belle's Stratagem"

Dorincourt, ...Mr. Chambers
(from the Theatre Royal, Haymarket) [1]
Sir George Touchwood, ...Mr. J. Kenna
Courtall, ...Mr. Courtney
Flutter, ...Mr. Bignall
Saville, ...Mr. J. Bignall
Villers, ...Mr. Dunham
Dick, ...Mr. Riffets

[1] Mr. Chambers made his first American appearance at the Southwark, Philadelphia, December 22, 1792 as *Don Ferdinand* in "Don Juan." At the close of the present season he married Miss Charlotte Sully, in Charleston.

Servant, ...Mr. Sweeney
Mountebank, ...Mr. Andrews
And, Hardy, ...Mr. Hamilton
Widow Rackett, ...Mrs. West
Lady Frances Touchwood, ...Miss Sully
Miss Ogle, ...Mrs. Grey
Kitty Wilks, ...Miss E. Sully
And, Letitia Hardy, ...Mrs. Bignall

In Act 4th A Masquerade Scene and
A Song by Mrs. Bignall,
To which will be added,
The Comic Opera of
"The Quaker, or May-Day Dower"

Steady (the Quaker), ...Mr. West
Solomon (his man), ...Mr. Bignall
Farmer Easy, ...Mr. Riffets
Clodpole, ...Mr. Bignall, jun.
Cudden, ...Mr. Andrews
And, Lubin Blackhorn, ...Mr. Chambers
Gillian, ...Mrs. Bignall
Cicely, ...Mrs. Decker
And, Floretta, ...Miss Sully

By Authority
Charleston Theatre
This Evening, the 11th instant (March)
Will be presented
The Historical Tragedy of
"King Richard III,
Or The Battle of Bosworth Field,"

King Richard, ...Mr. Chambers
King Henry, ...Mr. Hamilton
Duke of Buckingham, ...Mr. J. Kenna
Prince Edward, ...Miss Sully
Duke of York, ...Master Oliphant
Lord Stanley, ...Mr. Andrews
Lieut. of the Tower, ...Mr. Courtney
Catesby, ...Mr. J. Bignall
Radcliffe, ...Mr. Kedey
Norfolk, ...Mr. Dunham
And, Earl of Richmond, ...Mr. Bignall
Lady Anne, ...Mrs. Grey
Duchess of York, ...Mrs. Oliphant
And, Queen Elizabeth, ...Mrs. West

To which will be added
The Musical Entertainment of
"The Romp, or Love in a City—"

Watty Cockney, ...Mr. Bignall
Capt. Sightly, ...Mr. Courtney
Old Cockney, ...Mr. Riffets
Servant, ...Mr. Andrews
And, Old Barnacle, ...Mr. J. Kenna

Miss LaBlonde, ...Miss Sully
Penelope, ...Miss E. Sully
And, Prissy Tomboy (The Romp), ...Mrs. Bignall

CHARLESTON THEATRE

This Evening, the 15th inst. (March)
Will be presented
Dr. Goldsmith's Celebrated Comedy of
"She Stoops to Conquer,
Or the Mistakes of a Night"

Young Marlow, ...Mr. Chambers
Mr. Hardcastle, ...Mr. J. Kenna
Hastings, ...Mr. Andrews
Diggory, ...Mr. Hamilton
Roger, ...Mr. Dunham
Muggins, ...Mr. Courtney
Stingo, ...Mr. Riffets
Sir Charles Marlow, ...Mr. J. Bignall
And, Tony Lumpkin (with a Song), ...Mr. Bignall
Mrs. Hardcastle, ...Mrs. Grey
Miss Neville, ...Miss E. Sully
Maid, ...Miss Sully
And, Miss Hardcastle, ...Mrs. Bignall

To which will be added
O'Keefe's Comic Opera of "The
Poor Soldier"

Patrick, (the poor soldier) .....Mr. Courtney
Capt. Fitzroy, ...Mr. J. Kenna
Dermot, ...Mr. Chambers
Bagatelle, ...Mr. Hamilton
Father Luke, ...Mr. Bignall
Irish Boy, ...Master Oliphant
Darby, ...Mr. West
Norah, ...Mrs. Decker
And, Kathleen, ...Mrs. Bignall

On the 20th of March an entirely new offering was made to the audience when a new comedy, never performed here before, introduced to them "The Dramatist, or Stop Him Who Can," as performed at Covent Garden with distinguished applause. The original Epilogue in the character of "The Dramatist," by Mr. Bignall, and the first performance here of the Comic Opera "The Wedding Ring" with the original overture, etc.

On March 21 appeared in the *Gazette* the following communication: "Theatrical Request to the Ladies.

That they will be kind enough to lay aside the dress of feathers (particularly at a time when either the turban or some more similar ornament is the rage), as these preclude the gentlemen who have the honor of being their attendants, from even a glance at the stage — and the subscriber will deem it a particular honor of the Fair to be seated, except during the intervals of performance. Bachelor."

The 22d of March was presented the Comic Opera "The Maid of the Mill" with Mr. Chambers as *Lord Ainsworth*; with (by desire) the "Mansions of Peace," and "Ralph, the Miller's Son," by Mr. Bignall, and "Patty, the Maid of the Mill," Mrs. Bignall; in the farce "Barnaby Brittle" (with a Song) Mr. J. Kenna, and *Mrs. Brittle,* Mrs Bignall.

This letter was copied in the *Gazette* from the National *Gazette* (no date):

A theatre is now erected in Charleston, S. C., in consequence of a repeal of a former prohibitory law of the legislature of that state, and we fear strenuous exertions are shortly to be made in Boston for a like repeal of the law in force against stage exhibitions in that state. Under judicious management there is no doubt but a theatre might be rendered morally instructive and innocently entertaining even in a democratic Government; at the same time it is too true that many plays now in high vogue, ought to undergo a sentence of expulsion, as illy adapted to inculcate that virtuous simplicity, humility of demeanor and love of equal liberty, which ought alike to actuate governors and governed in a pure and virtuous republic.

If on the American Stage we are to be entertained with dramatic productions exhibiting the theatrical foppery of passionate Kings, pouting Queens, rakish Princes, and flirting Princesses, knavish Ministers and peevish Secretaries, lamenting misfortunes in which the bulk of mankind are no way concerned; daggering, poisoning, or hanging themselves for grievances that are purely imaginary, better we were without them..... It has ever been the policy of minsters of state, in all monarchical governments merging towards monarchy, to create and countenance alluring amusements in order to prevent the people from thinking. * * *

A few years ago when parties ran high in England, Garrick was employed by the Government to give a jubilee in honor of Shakspeare at Stratford-upon-Avon. The scheme succeeded beyond ex-

pectation: Wilkes and Liberty were neglected and for a long time nobody meddled with politics.

To the same purpose the celebrated dancer, Vestris, for some years danced away every political idea of the English nation. The old despotic French government when it found itself going, made an effort to divert the people with balloons and for some time the project seemed to take — but both French and Americans have since shown the world that they know how to enjoy rational amusements without surrendering up the faculty of thinking, etc.

Easter week is a gala everywhere, but in Charleston, where Lent was usually kept very strictly, especially Passion Week, the reaction to gaiety was marked. On Easter Monday evening the Theatre, after being closed for Passion Week, opened with a repetition of the bill of March 2, "As You Like it," and "The Agreeable Surprise."

On April 1 Bignall & West had this card in the *Gazette*:

"Ladies and gentlemen are requested to order their coachmen to sit down with their horses' heads to the south-west, and take up to the northward, as it may prevent confusion and accidents."

On April 3d, an elaborate description accompanies the bill for the evening of "Edward & Elenora," followed by "The Citizen," a song by Mr. Courtney and Mr. West.

A new production for Charleston was presented on April 8th, in the comic opera of "Inkle and Yarico, or the American Heroine" — "as performed in all the theatres in London, Pennsylvania and Virginia, with the most distinguished applause," the original overture, etc.

This is the first announcement in a Charleston theatre-bill of the success of a production in places other

than London, and the prestige of the Northern playhouses is for the first time recognized here.

The bill continues: "In the course of the opera, the following scenes will be presented: An American Forest painted by Mons. Odin;[1] Yarico's cave, hung with the skins of wild beasts, painted by Mr. Schultz; a scene of Rocks by Mons. Odin; a sea with a ship in full sail, by Mr. Schultz; the Town of Barbadoes with a calm sea and a Ship at anchor, by Mr. Schultz." The farce was the "King and Miller of Mansfield."

Sheridan's celebrated "The School for Scandal" was given April 6, with Mr. Bignall as *Charles Surface,* Mrs. West as *Lady Teazle*, Mr. Courtney as *Careless,* with songs and the comic opera afterward of Rosina with Mr. Chambers as *Belville,* and Mrs. Bignall as *Phoebe.*

It would be interesting to know the consensus of opinion as to the interpretations of these actors of these celebrated rôles, but not a word can be found.

April 8.

THE TRAGEDY OF
HAMLET, PRINCE OF DENMARK,

Hamlet, ...Mr. Bignall
Horatio, ...Mr. Hamilton
Laertes, ...Mr. Chambers
Polonius, ...Mr. West
Claudius, ...Mr. Andrews
Rosencrantz, ...Mr. Bignall, jun.
Guildenstern, ...Mr. Kedey
Player King, ...Mr. Courtney
1st Grave Digger, ...Mr. West
2nd Grave Digger, ...Mr. Riffets
And, The Ghost, ...Mr. J. Kenna
Queen, ...Mrs. Decker
Player-Queen, ...Mrs. Gray
And, Ophelia, ...Mrs. Bignall

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[1] Mons. Odin was the scene-painter *Audin*, whose name was variously spelled by the printers. He was, for many years, associated with the Charleston stage, and was succeeded by his son. Then came Mons. Belzons and Mr. Oliphant. Their successor, Mr. Schultz, had formerly been Mr. Audin's assistant.

Between the Play and Farce (by desire)
Poor Jack, by Mr. Chambers
To which will be added "The
Virgin Unmasked"

Coupee, ...Mr. J. Kenna
Ben, ...Mr. Bignall
Thomas, ...Mr. Bignall, jun.
Goodwill, ...Mr. Andrews
Quaser, ...Mr. Courtney
And, Blister, ...Mr. Hamilton
Lucy Goodwill, ...Mrs. Bignall

"The *Morning Star",* which had just appeared in the newspaper firmament, was giving occasional dramatic criticisms.

The American comedy, written by a Citizen of the United States, called "The Father, or American Shandyism" — performed in Pennsylvania and Virginia with the most distinguished approbation — and the comic opera of "Love in a Camp, or Patrick in Prussia" — being the sequel to "The Poor Soldier" — were given on the tenth of April.

On the twelfth of the month the comedy of "The Foundling, or Virtue Rewarded", by Moore, the author of "The Gamester" and the celebrated comic opera "The Deserter".

"The Beggar's Opera," which had been in rehearsal for some time past and had been promised as soon as perfected, was presented on the 13th with "all the exceptional passages of it obliterated."

The tragedy of "The Grecian Daughter, or Filial Piety," with the comic opera "The Flitch of Bacon" held the boards on April 19, and Miss Sully again filled the leading rôle in the farce. This young actress was steadily gaining in proficiency and popularity and daily advancing in the importance of her rôles. Mr. J. Kenna and Miss Sully again take the leading characters in the

"Burletta of Midas," which followed the new comedy "The Road to Ruin, or School for Gamesters," which upward of a hundred nights had been performed "with distinguished approbation at Covent Garden" and was given here on the 19th of April.

April 20 — The *City Gazette*:

This evening will be presented the
Inimitable Piece,

(with proper scenery, machinery, dresses, music, dances, and decorations, written by Shakspeare, and altered by Dryden) called
"The Tempest,
Or The Enchanted Island."

"The opening discovers a troubled horizon and tempestuous sea, where the usurper's vessel is tossed a considerable time in sight, and gives signal of an approaching storm amid repeated claps of thunder, lightning, hail, rain, etc., being dashed on a chain of rocks — (which both sides of the stage strikingly represent) and at the same instant a dreadful shower of fire pouring from the distempered elements; the crew gives signals of distress, the waves and winds rise to an affecting degree and the vessel sinks in full view of the audience; the scenes altogether forming a most awful but perfect picture of a ship-wreck. This hurricane (which is supposed to be raised by magic) ceasing, a delightful prospect of the Enchanted Island appears, also of the Enchanted dwellings, — here the business of the play commences — and through the course of it (which abounds with poetic beauties) is represented the strange being, Caliban, a monster of the Isle, dressed from nature, and agreeable to the author's fancy, of that wonderful and truly original character.

Prospero (the banished Duke of Milan), ...Mr. J. Kenna
Ferdinand (Prince of Savoy), ...Mr. Chambers
Alonzo, (the usurping Duke), ...Mr. Riffets
Antonio and Gonzales } (his privy counsellors), ... { Mr. Dunham / Mr. Andrews
Caliban (a monster of the Isle) .....Mr. J. Bignall
Hipolito (a youth who has never seen a woman), ...Mr. Courtney
Mustatis, Sailor, ...Mr. Riffets
Ventoso, Mr. Andrews
Stephano (master of the ship), ...Mr. West
And, Trinculo (the drunken boatswain), ...Mr. Bignall
Ariel, (an airy spirit), ...Miss Sully
Miranda and Dorinda } Girls who never saw a man, ... { Miss E. Sully and Mrs. Bignall

In Act 2nd,
A Dance of Demons,
bearing flaming torches

Singing Devils, ...
Messrs. Bignall, Sheldon, J. Bignall and West.

In Act 3rd,

The Spirit Ariel, invisible to Ferdinand, leads him in enchantment, and by proper songs, music, etc., (composed by that learned and excellent master, Dr. Purcell) brings the Prince to the Cave of Prospero, here his sudden passion for the Magician's Daughter, Miranda, and his friendship for the infant heir of Mantrid (whose simplicity in the end raises the jealousy of Ferdinand) joined to the virtuous loves of the two young females for the two young princes, which being wrongly understood by each party, introduces a scene truly natural and entertaining, until damped by the untimely fall of Hipolito, whose life is nevertheless preserved, by the interposition of magic; which likewise terminates the whole in

"A View of a Calm Sea"

on which Neptune and Amphitrite appear in a shell chariot drawn by sea horses.

Neptune, ...Mr. J. Bignall
Amphitrite, ...Mrs. Gray

The piece concludes with the spirit Ariel appearing in a chariot of clouds.

The Whole Scenery entirely new.
To which will be added, —
Mrs. Inchbald's Farce of "The Widow's Vow,
Or Second Thoughts are Best," etc.

Signor Storaces' celebrated comic opera "The Haunted Tower, or the Baron of Oakland," coming with "distinguished applause" from Drury Lane, was the offering for April 24. Mr. and Mrs Bignall took the leading roles — the servants, huntsmen, cook and fishermen were Charleston supernumeraries, and the scenes were painted by Mr. Schultz (his name is variously spelled in the bills) — rocks and tempestuous sea; Miranda's Cottage; Adela's Cottage; an antique apartment of the Haunted Tower; a Kitchen, with an ox roasting; and a beautiful outside view of the "Haunted Tower."

On the 26th of April was presented the new tragedy called "The Life and Death of Mary Queen of Scots,"

with Mrs. West as the unfortunate Queen, and the "Song of Queen Mary's Lamentation" by Mrs. Bignall.

Mr. J. Kenna was *Lord Esmond* and Mrs. Decker *Mary* in O'Keefe's Farce of "The Prisoner at Large."

Mr. Bignall's Benefit
April 29th, 1793, presenting
The Celebrated Comic Opera of
"The Surrender of Calais,
Or Gallic Heroism,"
written by George Colman, jun., Esq., and the
Music by Dr. Arnold.

English

Edward 3rd, King of England, ...Mr. Courtney
Earl of Harcourt, ...Mr. Kedey
Sir Walter Manny, ...Mr. Durham
And, Philippa, Queen of England, ...Miss E. Sully

French

Eustace de St. Pierre, ...Mr. J. Kenna
Count Ribemont, ...Mr. Chambers
John de Vienne, Governour of Calais, ...Mr. J. Bignall
Old Man, ...Mr. Andrews
Sergeant, ...Mr. West
Patrick O'Carrol, ...Mr. Hamilton
Officer, ...Mr. Riffets
And, La Gloire, ...Mr. Bignall
Julia, ...Miss Sully
And, Madalan, ...Mrs. Bignall

The Six Citizens who offer up their lives
to save their Country —

Eustace de St. Pierre, ...Mr. J. Kenna
Count Ribemont, ...Mr. Chambers
John d'Etire, ...Mr. J. Bignall
Pierre Vissant, ...Mr. Riffets
And, La Gloire, ...Mr. Bignall
Scaffold Makers, ...Mr. Andrews and Mr. Dunham

During the opera the following scenes
will be exhibited:

A view of the English Camp of Entrenchments with the Fortifications of Calais and a striking representation of the Gates of Calais (painted from an original picture of the celebrated Hogarth) through which the melancholy procession moves to King Edward's tent. A view of the Royal Pavilion and the Scaffold for the execution of those heroes who willingly offered their lives to save their country.

After the Opera, "The Hobby Horses, or
The World as It Goes", ...and
Mr. Bignall's Hobby

"No, indeed, Not I" — by Mrs. Bignall.
"Dish of All Sorts" (for the last time this season)
By Mr. Bignall —
To which will be added
A Comedy called "The Critic,
Or a Tragedy Rehearsed"

Written by R. B. Sheridan, Esq., author of "The School for Scandal", "Rivals", etc., and performed at Drury Lane upwards of two hundred nights with reiterated bursts of applause.

Puff, the Author, ...Mr. Bignall
Dangle, ...Mr. Courtney
Sir Fretful Plagiary, ...Mr. Hamilton
And, Sneers, the Critic, ...Mr. J. Kenna
Mrs. Dangle, ...Mrs. Decker

Characters of the Tragedy:—

Lord Burleigh, the Prince's Minister, ...Mr. West
Governour, ...Mr. Dunham
Earl of Leicester, ...Mr. Kedey
Sir Walter Raleigh, ...Mr. Andrews
Sir Christopher Hatton, ...Mr. J. Bignall
Beefeater, ...Mr. Riffets
And, Don Ferdinand Whiskerandos, ...Mr. Chambers
Polina, ...Miss Sully
Ellena, ...Miss E. Sully
And, Tilburina, ...Mrs. Kedey

In the same paper appears this card from Mr. Bignall:

Mr. Bignall understanding that it has been suggested that the Siege of Calais contains many expressions and reflections injurious to the character of the English and French nations, and as such a report, however ill-founded, might materially affect his Benefit this evening, he begs leave, with great deference, to assure the respectable inhabitants of Charleston, that so far from this opera being distinguished by anything so illiberal, it breathes only sentiments of pure heroism, genuine patriotism, and refined humanity, equally on the part of the British as on that of the French nation.

Mr. Bignall avails himself of this occasion further to assure his friends and patrons, the public, that his primary object has ever been to contribute, in the most especial manner, to their amusement; and that he never will present any piece to them, with a view of gratifying one part of the audience at the expense of wounding the feelings of any party whatever. His past conduct in this particular, he trusts, is irreproachable.

Mr. J. Kenna chose "May-Day" for his Benefit, and O'Keefe's much admired comedy, "Wild Oats, or the Strolling Gentleman" and the opera, (by particular desire) "No Song, No Supper, or the Lawyer in Sack."

Preceding the Play (returning to the old time custom of catering to the Masons of the city, who were among the Charleston Theatre's earliest patrons, going in former years in a body to certain plays "given by request." '

A Masonic Prologue to be delivered by brother J. Kenna. End of the Prologue, the favourite Masonic Song, "Come let us prepare we brothers that are," to be sung in conjunction by brothers Bignall and J. Kenna.

End of the 2nd Act "Tally Ho" to be sung by Mrs. Decker. "Bonny Willy" a favorite Scotch Song by Miss Sully. A sea song, "When up the Shrouds the Sailor goes," by Mr. Courtney.

"Bucks Have at Ye All, or the Picture of a Play House," by Mr. Bignall.

The admired "Dance of the Dwarfs Three Feet High, or Whimsical Transformation". *Dwarf*, Mr. Kenna, and *Clown*, Mr. Andrews, to which will be added the Comic Opera of "No Song, No Supper."

Mr. Courtney's Benefit on May 3, 1793, David Garrick and George Colman's Collaborated Comedy "The Clandestine Marriage" and Murphy's Farce of "Three Weeks after Marriage". At the End of the third Act of the play, Dibdin's admired song of "Lawyers pay you with Words," by Mr. Courtney. Between the play and the farce, by particular desire, "Lash'd to the Helm" by Mr. Courtney; the much admired song, "Four and Twenty Fiddlers," by Mr. Bignall, and the original Epilogue to the farce spoken by Mr. Kedey.

Mr. West's Benefit — May 6th —
The Comedy of "The Fashionable Lover"
End of Act 3rd, a song by Mrs. Bignall
Between the Play and the Farce,
"By Moonlight on the Green" a Song by Miss Sully.
To which was added (for that night only)
The Celebrated Pasticcio (as performed in
London upwards of 300 nights with distinguished applause)
called "The Evening Brush for Rubbing off the
Rust of Care."

Among a variety of laughable characters, too extensive to be enumerated, will be introduced the following:—
Spluttering Actors, Tragedy Taylors, Bell-wethers in Buskins, — Boglers in blank verse — Wooden actors, Ghosts without their lessons, Yorkshire Jockeys, Lullaby Jinglers, Theatrical Candidates, Tragedy Pipers, Tragedy Bruisers, Butchers of Blank verse, — Parish Clerks, Readers without their Eyes, — Foote's Hamlet, Clown, and Church Warden. The Irish School Master and Pupil, The Actor and Scotch Pedler.

In the course of the Pasticcio the following Original Songs —
"Haste Away to the Brush", Mr. West,
Shakespeare's "Seven Ages," Mr. Bignall.

"The Siege of Troy, or the Classical Ballenamora" by Mr. West.
"Paddy Bull's Expedition," Mr. Bignall.
The whole to conclude with "The Golden Days of Good Queen Bess." by Mr. West.
(This Pasticcio was originally performed in America, by Messrs. West and Bignall with the greatest success.)

The *Morning Star* which, unfortunately, is known only by allusions to its articles in the *City Gazette,* had evidently written a complimentary review of some of the season's offerings, for the following communication from the Managers of the Theatre is printed in the issue of May 6:

We consider ourselves under particular obligations for your very friendly intimation in the *Star* of this day respecting the most excellent production of Mr. Lillo's "George Barnwell or the London Prentice", and assure you it will be performed for the benefit of the orphans — to which will be annexed O'Keefe's new farce (never performed in America but once) of "Modern Antiques or the Merry Mourners", and as you are pleased to say that this play will gratify our numerous friends, we presume it could not be presented to them on a better occasion. We feel singular pleasure in thus complying with the wishes of so respectable an audience as that of Charleston, and our future conduct shall ever lead us to anticipate their desires and contribute all in our power to their gratification and amusement." We are, Sir, Yours and

the Public's Grateful Servants,
West and Bignall.

Miss Sully's Benefit, May 8, 1793, consisted of the Comedy of "The Busybody" written by Mrs. Centlivre and O'Keefe's comic opera of "The Poor Soldier" with two songs by Miss Sully — "Be Quick, for I'm in Haste," and "The Wedding Day," and a song by Mrs. Decker. Mr. Bignall and Mr. Courtney took the leading men's parts.

The selection of these particular songs by Miss Sully occasioned, no doubt, many pleasantries among the members of the company, as she had recently become engaged to Mr. Chambers and their wedding was to

take place on May 30th, the evening after the close of the theatre.

In this day's paper appeared a communication from a Citizen interested in the Theatre:

"You will oblige a customer by publishing the following Query: 'If as the managers of the Charleston Theatre have, with their usual desire of giving pleasure, promised to perform the celebrated play of "George Barnwell" for the benefit of the Orphan House, would it not be an improvement on the intention, to present the subjects under the bounty of that institution with tickets, as by opening their eyes when young, it may tend to their closing of them with decency.' A Friend as well to the Poor as to the Drama."

MRS. BIGNALL'S BENEFIT

The celebrated comic opera (never performed but once in America) called "The Woodman, or Female Archery". With the original overture, etc. Words by the Rev. Bate Dudley, the music composed by Mr. Shield and the accompaniments by Mr. Bradford of Charleston. *The Woodman*, Mr. J. Kenna; *Polly Fairlop* (being her first appearance on this stage), Miss West, and *Dolly Fairlop*, Mrs. Bignall. Between the play and the farce the celebrated Law Case (written by George Alexander Stevens, Esq.,) of

"Bullum versus Boatum"
will be recited by Mr. Bignall
to which will be added
Mrs. Inchbald's laughable Farce
"The Midnight Hour, or
War of Wits", as translated
by that lady from the French.

Mr. and Mrs. Bignall took the leading rôles in both opera and farce.
In the course of the opera and farce were presented —
A Target with substantial devices and a View of a Hop Ground and Garden with Pavilions and Fairlop's Cottage.

MRS. DECKER'S BENEFIT

May 15th
Dr. Hoardly's Comedy, "The Suspicious Husband," and by particular desire — O'Keefe's farce of
"The Prisoner at Large,"

with "Bonny Jenny O", a favorite Scotch song, by
Mrs. Decker, and also
"Tally Ho", and a song by Mr. Chambers.
Mr. Hamilton's Benefit this Evening
May 17th, when will be presented by particular
desire of his friends, the celebrated Comedy, written
By Mr. Cumberland, author of "The West Indian," etc., called
"The Fashionable Lover, or Faithful Scotchman" with
Mr. Hamilton as *Colin McLeod* and Mrs. Decker as *Lucinda.*
A Scotch Song, by Mrs. Decker.
"The Irishman Press'd", a comical song by Mr. Hamilton;
Dibdin's favorite comic song of "The Soldier's Dish"
by Mr. Courtney; and a much admired entertainment
(never performed here), written by Young Colman, author of "Inkle
and Yarico," etc., called:
"Warp and Means, or Trip to Dover,"
Sir David Dunder, Mr. Hamilton; and *Miss Harriet Dunder,* Miss
Sully.

"George Barnwell" was by particular desire given for the Orphans' Benefit on May 20, with Mr. Bignall as *George Barnwell* and Mr. J. Kenna the *London Merchant,* and Mrs. West as *Millwood;* a prologue applicable to the occasion spoken by Mr. Bignall; "No, Indeed, not I" (for the last time this season) by Mrs. Bignall; A Song by Mr. Chambers, and a song by Mr. West; and O'Keefe's new entertainment — "The Merry Mourners."

On the 25th of May this Appreciation appeared "From a Correspondent:"

On Tuesday evening last Messrs. West & Bignall's Company of Comedians performed with distinguished applause before a very numerous and respectable audience the Tragedy of "George Barnwell" for the benefit of the Orphans, the proceeds of which clear of all expense exceeds 300 pounds sterling. Great credit is due to the Managers for their singular exertions in behalf of an asylum for orphans and the children of poor and distressed parents in this city, to which it is their intention to give an annual benefit.

Mr. and Mrs. Kedey's Benefit was May 23: Mr. and Mrs. Riffet's and Mr. Andrew's Benefit May 27; and Mr. Bignall's May 29. Mrs. West's Benefit — the grand finale of the season — was a gorgeous and elaborate production, a full column announcement, as follows:

MRS. WEST'S BENEFIT — MAY 31.

Shakespeare's Celebrated Tragedy of

Romeo and Juliet

Romeo, ...Mr. Bignall
Friar Lawrence, ...Mr. J. Kenna
Benvolio, ...Mr. J. Bignall
Tybalt, ...Mr. Kedey
Paris, ...Mr. Courtney
Capulet, ...Mr. Hamilton
Friar John, ...Mr. Keenor
(a new actor in the troupe)
Montague, ...Mr. Dunham
Peter (the starved apothecary), ...Mr. Riffets
Prince, ...Mr. Andrews
Balthazar, ...Mr. Greenwood
(new name in the cast)
And, Mercutio, ...Mr. Chambers
Lady Capulet, ...Mrs. Gray
Nurse, ...Mrs. Kedey
And Juliet, ...Mrs. West

In ACT II

A Grand Masquerade Scene

in ACT V

A Solemn Dirge and Funeral Procession to the

Monument of the Capulets

To which will be added

A Musical Entertainment called

Shakespeare's Jubilee

(as performed in London upwards of one hundred nights with all the necessary decorations — Inn Yard, Music, Banners, etc. The Music by Dibdin.)

Irishman, ...Mr. Hamilton
First Serenader, ...Mr. Chambers
Second Serenader .....Mr. Courtney
Showman, ...Mr. Dunham
Ballad Singers, ...Messrs. Bignall and Kenna
First Pedlar, ...Mr. J. Bignall
Second Pedlar, ...Mr. Andrews
Waiter, ...Mr. Keenor (new recruit)
And Ralph, ...Mr. J. Kenna
First Country Girl (with Sweet Willy O!) .....Miss Sully
Second Country Girl, ...Mrs. Decker
Goody Benson, ...Mrs. Gray
And, Goody Jarvis, ...Mrs. Kedey

End of the First Act

The Grand Pageant as performed at

Stratford-on-Avon in commemoration of the

Immortal Shakespeare

[David Garrick's arrangement.]

ORDER OF THE PAGEANT

Comedies

Banner

"As You Like It"

Orlando, Mr. Chambers; *Adam*, Mr. J. Kenna; *Touchstone*, Mr. Sheldon [new name], and *Audrey*, Mrs. Gray.

Banner

"Merry Wives of Windsor" —

Randolph, Mr. J. Bignall; *Nym*, Mr. Riffets; *Pistol*, Mr. Keenor; *Falstaff*, Mr. Hamilton; *Mrs. Page*, Mrs. Decker; and *Mrs. Ford*, Mrs. Kedey.

Banner

"Merchant of Venice" —

Shylock, Mr. J. Kenna; *Launcelot*, Mr. Andrews; *Merchant*, Mr. Chambers; *Gaoler*, Mr. Riffets; *Bassanio*, Mr. Kedey; and *Portia*, Mrs. West.

Banner

"Much Ado about Nothing" —

Balthazar, (with a Song, "Sigh no more, Ladies,") Mr. Courtney; *Benedict*, Mr. J. Bignall; *Dogberry*, Mr. West; *Verges*, Mr. Riffets; *Conrad*, Mr. Dunham; and *Beatrice*, Mrs. Decker.

Tragedies

Banner

"Hamlet"

Ghost, Mr. Andrews; *Hamlet*, Mr. Bignall; *Ophelia*, Miss Sully.

Banner

"Macbeth"

Macbeth, Mr. J. Kenna; *Banquo*, Mr. Courtney; *Doctor*, Mr. Riffets; *Lady*, Mrs. Gray; and, *Lady Macbeth*, Mrs. West.

Banner

"King Richard III"

Richard, Mr. Chambers; *Catesby*, Mr. Andrews; *Princes*, Master Gray and Miss Sully; the *Queen*, Mrs. Kedey.

Banner

"Othello"

Othello, Mr. Kedey; *Largo*, Mr. J. Bignall; *Emilia*, Mrs. Gray; *Desdemona*, Miss E. Sully.

Banner

"Romeo and Juliet"

Romeo, Mr. Bignall; *Friar*, Mr. Hamilton; *Nurse*, Mrs. Decker; *Juliet*, Miss E. Sully.

Banner

"Cymbeline"

Posthumus, Mr. Chambers; *Iachimo*, Mr. J. Bignall.

"The Tragic Muse" — Mrs. West.

To conclude with a Roundelay and a striking representation of the Monument of Shakespeare

As in Westminster Abbey

Among the marriage notices in the *City Gazette* of June 1, 1793, is this: — "On Thursday evening, (May 30) by the Rev. Dr. Purcell, Mr. Chambers, comedian, to Miss Charlotte Sully."

JUNE 4, 1793 —

"Messrs. West & Bignall, and their families, were passengers in the ship Swift Packet, Capt. Thompson, which sailed yesterday, for Norfolk in Virginia."

On Friday, June 21, 1793 — The Orphans are again mentioned as being remembered by Benefactors: "With great pleasure we learn the Concert given by Mr. John Wilbain at his Coffee-House for the benefit of the Orphan House amounts to 60 pounds, 13s. 4d. sterling, which he has generously sent forward to the Commission. Messrs. Cortez & Co., have also sent forward to the Commission 20 pounds, 13s. sterling, for the benefit of the same institution. By such generous exertions we hope to see the building carried on with great expedition."

Friday, May 31, 1793 — *City Gazette*:

Yesterday the commissioners of the Orphan House received from Messrs. West & Bignall the following letter with the sum therein mentioned.

"To the Commissioners of the Orphan House —
Charleston, May 29th, 1793.

Gentlemen:

We think it our duty to inform ye, the benefit for the noble and very laudable institution ye have with so much avidity espoused, amounts to 306 pounds, 13s. 3d., which sum we beg your convenient time to receive; and gentlemen, be assured it is the greatest satisfaction that ever occurred to us, during the series of our theatrical life, that we have established a well regulated theatre, (the continuance of which shall ever be our primary object) in a city where liberality, benevolence, and charity are so conspicuously evinced, on every deserving occasion.

"We beg your acceptance of a benefit annually, which as now, shall be free of all expenses whatever. We have the honor to subscribe ourselves, with the utmost respect,

Gentlemen,
Yours and the publics' servants,
Gratefully and Obediently,
West and Bignall."

To which a grateful letter of acceptance was returned by the unanimous vote of the commissioners of the

Orphan House through their chairman, Charles Lining.

THE SEASON'S PRODUCTIONS, 1793

Feb. 11 — The Highland Reel, ... O'Keefe
The Adventures of a Shawl ..... Mrs. Inchbald
12 — The Highland Reel, ... O'Keefe
The Widow's Vow, ... Mrs. Inchbald
13 — Percy, ... Miss Hannah Moore
The Romp, ... Shield
14 — Know your Own Mind, ... Arthur Murphy
The Quaker, ... Mrs. Centlivre
15 — Douglas, ... Rev. Mr. Horne
The Farmer, ... O'Keefe
16 — Robin Hood, ... Shield
The Adventures of a Shawl, ... Mrs. Inchbald
18 — Such Things Are, ... Mrs. Inchbald
Peeping Tom of Coventry, ... Arnold
20 — Isabella, ... Southern
The Pannel,
22 — A School for Soldiers, ... John Henry
Old Vulcan or Gods Metamorphosed,
25 — Comedy (never performed here)
The Contrast or The American Song of Liberty, ... Written by Major Tyler
25 — Rosina, or Love in a Village, ... Mrs. Brooke
27 — Venice Preserved, ... Otway
No Song No Supper, ... Storace

Mch. 1 — Beaux' Stratagem, ... Farquhar
The Waterman,
4 — The Gamester, ... Moore
The Padlock, ... Bickerstaff
8 — The West Indian, ... Cumberland
The Son in Law, ... Arnold
11 — King Richard III, ... Shakespeare
The Romp, ... Shield
13 — Love in a Village, ... Bickerstaff
The Lying Valet, ... Garrick
15 — She Stoops to Conquer, ... Dr. Goldsmith
The Poor Soldier, ... O'Keefe
18 — The Highland Reel, ... O'Keefe
Retaliation,
20 — The Dramatist (a new comedy never performed here before), ... Reynolds
The Wedding Ring (a comic opera never performed here before), ... Dibdin
22 — Maid of the Mill, ... Bickerstaff
Barnaby Brittle,
(Arranged from Betterton's Amorous Widow)
25 — As You Like It, ... Shakespeare
The Agreeable Surprise, ... O'Keefe

Apr. 1 — As You Like It, ... Shakespeare
The Agreeable Surprise, ... O'Keefe
5 — Inkle and Yarico, ... Colman the Younger
King and Miller of Mansfield, ... Dodsley
6 — The School for Scandal, ... Sheridan
Rosina, ... Mrs. Brooke
8 — Hamlet, Prince of Denmark, ... Shakespeare
The Virgin Unmasked, ... Fielding
10 — The Father, ... Written by a Citizen of the United States
Love in a Camp, ... O'Keefe
12 — The Foundling, ... Mr. Moore
(author of the Gamester)
The Deserter,
13 — The Beggar's Opera, ... Gay
All the World's a Stage, ... Jackman
15 — The Wonder, ... Mrs. Centlivre
The World's Ups and Downs,
17 — The Grecian Daughter, ... Murphy
The Flitch of Bacon, ... Bate
19 — The Road to Ruin, ... Holcroft
School for Gamesters,
20 — The Tempest, ... Shakespeare
The Widow's Vow, ... Mrs. Inchbald
24 — The Haunted Tower, ... Signor Storace
Love a la Mode, ... Charles Macklin
26 — Mary Queen of Scots,
The Prisoner at Large, ... O'Keefe
29 — The Surrender of Calais, ... Arnold
The Critic (Mr. Bignall's Benefit),

May 1 — Wild Oats, ... O'Keefe
Bucks Have at Ye All,
(Mr. J. Kenna's Benefit)
3 — The Clandestine Marriage, ... Garrick & Colman
Three Weeks After Marriage, ... Murphy
(Mr. Courtney's Benefit)
6 — The Fashionable Lover, ... Cumberland
The Evening Brush,
(Pasticcio) Songs-Recitations,
(Mr. West's Benefit)
8 — The Busy Body, ... Mrs. Centlivre
The Poor Soldier, ... O'Keefe
(Miss Sully's Benefit)
10 — The Provoked Husband, ... Vanbrugh
The Devil to Pay, ... Coffey
(Mr. Chambers' Benefit)
13 — The Woodman, ... Dudley and Shield
The Midnight Hour, ... Mrs. Inchbald
(Mrs. Bignall's Benefit)
15 — The Suspicious Husband, ... Dr. Hoadly
The Prisoner at Large, ... O'Keefe
(Mrs. Decker's Benefit)

May 17 — The Fashionable Lover, ...Cumberland
Ways and Means, ...Colman the Younger
(Mr. Hamilton's Benefit)
20 — George Barnwell, ...Lillo
The Merry Mourners, ...O'Keefe
(Orphans' Benefit)
23 — The Jealous Wife, ...George Colman, Sr.
The True-born Irishman, ...Charles Macklin
(Benefit Mr. & Mrs. Kedey)
27 — The Rivals, ...Sheridan
Padlock, ...Bickerstaff
(Benefit Mr. Riffets and Mr. Andrews)
29 — The School for Scandal, ...Sheridan
The Liar, ...Foote
(Benefit of Mr. J. Bignall)

OPERAS AND PANTOMIMES GIVEN BY WEST & BIGNALL

Feb. 11 — Highland Reel, ...O'Keefe
13 — The Romp, ...Shield
14 — Quaker,
15 — Farmer, ...Mrs. Centlivre
16 — Robin Hood, ...Shield
22 — Poor Vulcan,
25 — Rosina,

March 1 — Waterman,
4 — Padlock,
6 — Quaker,
8 — Son-in-Law, ...Arnold
11 — Romp,
13 — Love in a Village,
15 — Poor Soldier,
18 — Highland Reel,
20 — Wedding Ring, ...Dibdin
22 — Maid of the Mill, ...Bickerstaff

April 5 — Inkle and Yarico,
6 — Rosina,
10 — Love in a Camp,
12 — Deserter,
13 — Beggar's Opera,
15 — Farmer,
17 — Flitch of Bacon,
19 — Midas,
29 — Surrender of Calais, ...Arnold

May 1 — No Song No Supper,
4 — Padlock,
8 — Poor Soldier,
10 — Devil to Pay,
13 — Woodman, ...Shield
27 — Padlock.

MR. MATTHEW SULLY, SR
(BY HIS SON THOMAS SULLY)

CHAPTER IX

West and Bignall's Second Season
1794
Introducing the Sully Family
Who Made Their Home In Charleston, and
Mr. and Mrs. Marriott
Benefit for American Captives in Algiers, £256, 20s. 6d.

CHAPTER IX

In 1794 there were only five towns in the United States that could properly be called cities — New York, Philadelphia, Boston, Baltimore, and Charleston, and not one of these had a population of 50,000. King Cotton's rule had just begun in the cotton-belt of the South, greatly stimulated by Eli Whitney's invention of the cotton gin in 1793.

The earliest discussions of the comparative merits of Indian or Egyptian cotton and the Sea-Island long staple, took place no doubt at Williams's Coffee House, which was the favorite meeting-place of the day. Here theatre tickets were on sale; here were held the business meetings of the St. Cecilia Society, the Jockey Club, the Ugly Club, and the Anacreontic Society with its catches and glees; and here were summoned the Charleston Light Dragoons, (the same that were mustered in as a part of Charleston's quota to the National Guard for the World-War), the Charleston Blues, and other military organizations.

The Sully family of actors and actresses and painters of distinction, who came from England and settled in Charleston in 1792—living out their lives here, all the daughters marrying in Charleston—deserve special mention, which seems to be in place here.

THE SULLYS

Romance has painted for us the early portraits of Matthew Sully and his loving wife, usurping the place of filial obedience and changing their home from England to America.

A quaint and out-of-the-world village, Long Crendon,

whose ancient Anglican church bore on its walls many memorials of the Sully family, was the childhood home of Matthew Sully's father, where he married and lived with his wife and a son and a daughter, until, having prospered, he moved with his family in middle life to London.

When young Matthew's school days were over, he entered a theological seminary as his father desired him to study for the church, but soon after his entrance he met the charming young Sarah Chester, and became so enamored of her that Holy Orders completely left his mind, and he laid his heart at Sarah's feet and pleaded for an early marriage. When he acquainted his father with his decision the parental ire knew no bounds, and he was informed that if he persisted in this course disinheritance would follow. Affection proved stronger than avarice; he and Miss Chester were married, and lived happily ever afterward, but Cupid had changed the entire tenor of their lives.

The now penniless Matthew Sully, in looking about for a vocation, decided to transfer what oratorical powers he possessed from the church to the stage. He was musical, as was his wife, and this was a strong bond between them. It is not known how long they lived in London after marriage, but it is known that their youngest son Thomas (later the eminent portrait painter) was born in Horncastle, England, where they lived for nine years, coming from there to America in 1792, and settling in Charleston. There was a reason for this. Matthew Sully's only (?) sister sympathized with him to such an extent that she also braved her father's displeasure, went on the stage, and became the

wife of Thomas Wade West, an Actor-Manager, and also Supervisor of the building of Theatres; and it was during the building of the Charleston Theatre under his direction that the Sully family came to Charleston and joined their relatives.

At the time of their arrival in this country, Matthew Sully's eldest son, Lawrence, had reached young manhood, as had Matthew, the next son, for upon Matthew Sr.'s first appearance as *Lieutenant of the Tower* in "The Earl of Essex," his son Matthew Jr. appeared in the bills as "Mr. M. Sully, in surprising feats of manly activity, who was justly the admiration of Britain." A Philadelphia paper said of him the next season: "Mr. Sully Jr. exceeded everything that has yet appeared in America in the species of acting which was allotted him." "Ground and lofty-tumbling and surprizing feats of manly activity" were greatly admired in those days and introduced into the finest programmes. He was an actor in legitimate parts as well. Mr. Sully Sr. was billed as " a celebrated Harlequin" — and Harlequins were the joy of the times — and he had a fine voice, and was also a Pantomime-Director.

The Charleston or Broad-Street Theatre was opened in 1793 and from that date through many years the Sullys acted on the American Stage, here and "to the Northward." Charlotte, Elizabeth, and little Harriet, a child of five, appeared at the Charleston Theatre its first season, and the other members of the family the next season, 1749—Matthew Sr., Matthew Jr. Chester, Julia, and little Thomas.

Lawrence Sully did not go upon the stage, but studied art and became a Miniature painter. In 1799

he married Miss Sarah Annis, of Richmond, Virginia. Matthew Sully, the actor, married Elizabeth Robertson of Virginia, and their son, Robert Matthew Sully, studied with his uncle Thomas and later in England, and achieved success in his art second only to that of his distinguished relative.

Thomas Sully in his youth was apprenticed to his brother-in-law, Mr. Belzons, a French miniaturist in Charleston, who married Julia Sully in 1794. After a quarrel with his violent-tempered instructor, young Thomas joined his oldest brother Lawrence in 1801, in Richmond. His brother died in 1803, and Thomas married his widow in 1805. They removed to Philadelphia in 1808, and his artistic career belongs there.

As a lad he appeared upon the Charleston boards a number of times in "feats of agility," but from his school-days when he and Charles Fraser, the miniaturist, studied together, art claimed him, and some of his earliest attempts are owned in this city, as many of his most beautiful portraits painted at the zenith of his powers.

Matthew Sully's five daughters all married in Charleston. Charlotte's wedding notice appeared first —"Married on Thursday evening, May 30th, by the Rev. Dr. Purcell, Mr. Chambers, Comedian, to Miss Charlotte Sully." *City Gazette,* June 1, 1793.

Mr. Chambers was an English actor of distinction, who had been at the Theatre-Royal, Haymarket, before coming to America, making his first appearance at the Southwark, in Philadelphia, in 1792.

Julia Sully married next, a French Miniature painter residing in Charleston, Mr. Belzons, in 1794.

Jane, who did not go upon the stage, married Mr. J. B. Le Roy, of Charleston.

Harriet, who appeared on the stage only as a child, married Dr. Porcher; and Elizabeth eloped with young Middleton Smith, the son of the Landgrave. The girls were educated in Dublin and also first appeared on the boards of that city. A Charleston bill makes this mention: "The Celebrated Juvenile Horn-pipe by Miss E. Sully composed by Signor Bianchi, and danced by her at The Theatre Royal upwards of thirty nights."

All the Sully family were handsome, but Elizabeth, at twenty-five, was said to be radiantly beautiful, and at this time to have all the town at her feet. She had not wished to go upon the stage, but had done so at her father's desire, and conscious of her lack of histrionic ability, it is said, she did not care for the applause, called forth mainly by her beauty of face and form, but her perseverance made her a very good actress, and her lovely face made her very popular.

However, she continued on the stage a number of years and she and her brother Matthew were playing in Charleston under Mr. Placide's Management as late as 1810. Very soon after her marriage Elizabeth's beauty and sweetness of nature won over all of her husband's people, and as Mrs. Middleton Smith, she lived many years, admired and beloved by all.

A grandson of Dr. Porcher says that he was often told of visits in company with her aunt, Mrs. West, in London by Mrs. Porcher, who frequently saw a handsome coach with outriders and liveried coachman, containing a pompous looking gentleman, and her aunt

would remark: "There goes your grandfather, but he doesn't even know that we are in the city."[1]

In the *City Gazette and Advertiser* the following advertisement appeared, January 3, 7, 8 and 9, 1794:

THEATRE

West and Bignall (with the greatest respect) inform the ladies and gentlemen of Charleston and its vicinity, that the Theatre is fitted up for their reception in a style of greatest elegance and will open positively on Monday week with a play and farce which will be announced in the bills of the day. They humbly hope from their indefatigable exertions in procuring performers and musicians of distinguished excellence, to meet with that patronage so generally evinced to them last season, to merit a continuance of which will ever be their primary object, as they have the pleasure and distinguished honor of dramatically catering for their moral, instructive, and mirth-exciting amusements.

West and Bignall respectfully inform their friends and the public generally that in consequence of the unfortunate circumstance of contrary winds, the vessel, in which are part of their Company, not being yet arrived, they are unavoidably under the disagreeable necessity of deferring their humble efforts to amuse the public, for a few days.

January 15th.

In these days of private cars with every luxury and at high speed, one can scarcely picture to oneself the inconvenience and even bodily distress suffered by the tempest-tossed voyagers, who, even before they could get rid of their sea-legs, were expected blithely to appear before large audiences and, with their own feelings thrust into the remotest back-ground, make merry for the enjoyment of others:

January 20, under Shipping News:

"The Sloop *Warwick*, West, Norfolk, five days, in whom a part of West and Bignall's company arrived."

The *Gazette* of Tuesday, January 21, prints the opening bill for Wednesday, January 22:

BY AUTHORITY

Charleston Theatre

Tomorrow evening, January 22nd, 1794,

[1] Information for this sketch from Mr. E. W. Hughes of Charleston, great-grandson of Matthew Sully: "Thomas Sully's Register of Portraits;" the "Life and Works of Thomas Sully," by Edward Biddle and Mantle Fielding; South Carolina *Gazettes*, and a newspaper clipping in an old scrap-book.

THE SULLYS—1794

Will be presented the Tragedy of
"The Earl of Essex,
Or the Unhappy Favorite"
The Earl of Essex, Mr. Edgar from Covent Garden Theatre
Lord Burleigh, Mr. Hamilton,
Lieutenant of the Tower, Mr. M. Sully, [Sr.] being his first appearance,
Gentleman, Mr. Riffetts,
and Earl of Southampton, Mr. J. Kenna
Queen Elizabeth, Mrs. Edgar, being her first appearance,
and Countess of Rutland, Mrs. West.
Between the Play and Farce
A Song "The Tar for All Weathers" by Mr. Sully, Sr., being his first appearance
An Occasional Address to be spoken by Mr. Clifford
To which will be added the Comic Opera of
"The Farmer, or
The World's Ups and Downs."
Captain Valentine, Mr. Clifford from the Bath Theatre
Col. Dormant, Mr. J. Kenna
Fairly, Mr. Murray
Roundy, Mr. Sully, Sr.
Counsellor Flummery, Mr. Riffetts
Waiter, Master Sully [Chester]
And, Jemmy Jump, Mr. Bignall
Molly Maybush, Mrs. Chambers [née Charlotte Sully]
Louisa, Miss Sully [Elizabeth]
Landlady, Mrs. Murray
And, Betty Blackberry, Mrs. Edgar
In the course of the farce will be introduced a
Song called, Washington's Counsel for ever, Huzza! !
Written, composed and to be sung by Mr. Clifford, etc.

Mr. M. Sully, Master C. Sully, Miss Sully, and young Miss J. Sully made their débuts in Charleston during this season.

January 24, the "West Indian" was given and the comic opera "The Flitch of Bacon." Mr. Marriott from the Theatre in Edinburgh took the rôle of Belcour. Mr. Henderson, "being his first appearance," played *Capt. Dudley* and *Charles Dudley* was played by Mr. J. West "from the Bath Theatre," and Miss J. Sully (Julia) made "her first appearance on any stage" in the character of *Lucy.* The Songs were "Yarrow Vale" by Mr. Clifford, and "Ma Chère Amie," by Mr. Chambers.

In the History of the American Theatre, it is stated that Miss Sully made her début as *the Girl* in "Children of the Woods," July 25, with the Philadelphia Company, which was playing at Baltimore in 1796. Her "first appearance on any stage" occurred at the Charleston Theatre, two years and a half before her Baltimore appearance, as *Lucy* in the "Flitch of Bacon." Mr. Henderson made his first bow to the public as *Capt. Dudley,* at the same time in the same piece.

The theatrical offering for January 27 was:

Mrs. Inchbald's celebrated comedy (never performed here) of the "Child of Nature" which was adapted from "Zébé" the French piece. This was "with great taste selected from the dramatic works of the Marchioness of Sillery (late Countess of Genlis) by a lady who presented the Manager of the Covent Garden Theatre with a translation;" but, however correct or elegant, a mere translation must have precluded all prospect of success. The Manager therefore sent the play of "Zébé" to the present translator, who with much care and attention, prepared it for the stage. That care has been amply recompensed by the reception the piece has met with, and more especially in those parts of it which she has taken the liberty to add from her own invention.

"The Orphan, or the Unhappy Marriage" was the main attraction for January 29, followed by the farce written by Sheridan, "St. Patrick's Day," or the "Scheming Lieutenant." The part of *Monimia* was taken by Mrs. Marriott, "being her first appearance." At this play the audience always enjoyed itself mournfully, as attested by one who wrote:

> When poor Monimia weeps and raves, a sigh
> Bursts from each breast and tears from every eye.

In the same *Gazette* was a "Proposal" for publishing by subscription two volumes of sonnets and miscellaneous poems by Mrs. Marriott.

It is claimed by Seilhamer that Mrs. Marriott first appeared in Philadelphia during Hallam and Hodgkinson's last season, 1794-5, as *Julia* in Mrs. Inchbald's

"Midnight Hour" in September, 1794; but she appeared in Charleston eight months earlier; and the same claim was made for Mr. Marriott's first American appearance, as *Lothario* in the "Fair Penitent," when he also appeared first in Charleston coming here from the Edinburgh Theatre, and on January 24, acting *Belcour* in "The West Indian."

The comic opera, "The Highland Reel," with the original overture and the farce of the "Old Maid," was given on the 31st, the opera concluding with a double Allemande and Scotch Reel by Mr. M. Sully, Mrs. Chambers, and Miss Sully. "Shelty, the Laughing Piper," was played by Mr. Bignall and *Moggy,* the little Highland Soldier, by Mrs. Henderson. The part of the *Old Maid* was played by Mrs. Edgar.

"The Gamester, or False Friend" and the comic opera, "The Son-in-Law", held the boards on February 3d. A mild theatrical sensation was caused by the presentation at the Theatre on February 7th of Macklin's "Man of the World," never performed but once in America! It was followed by the comic opera of "The Poor Soldier."

A greater sensation was created by the arrival in town of some French Play-Actors, who applied to Messrs. West and Bignall for the use of their house for a night to present "Pygmalion" and some Pastoral Dances.

This request was granted by the Managers of the Charleston Theatre, but with the first success of the French players, a long standing trouble began for them.

The elaborate bill of "Pygmalion" — Pastoral Dances — "The Plebeian" — English Hornpipe — "The Hun-

ters and the Milk-Maid," winding up with a Grand Ballet—was no doubt the talk of the town, and hosts of French sympathizers, not regular theatre-goers, flocked to this first French performance in the city.

No press mention has been found concerning the French performance, and West and Bignall's regular bill as announced for February 10 was the Comedy of "The Young Quaker" and the farce, "The Agreeable Surprize."

The Jockey Club races were on, and "by particular desire of the gentlemen of the Jockey Club," Mr. Ricketts of the Circus gave special performances in the morning, performing the manual exercise of an American officer with a fire-lock showing all the motions—horse in full speed—taking the character of a Newmarket Jockey and a "Flying Mercury!" etc. This was the year before Mr. Ricketts established his amphitheatre in Philadelphia.

All sorts of chariots, chaises, chairs, and horses and trappings were offered for sale during Race Week, and George Long, Farrier, announced that he "crops, docks, nicks, cuts, and breaks young horses." And "to the curious" is offered the sight of a Beautiful African Lion measuring seven feet from nostrils to tail, and upwards of three feet high."

The Theatre bill for February 11 included Col. Tyler's comedy of "The Contrast, or the American Son of Liberty" and the farce, "The Lying Valet."

Mr. Bignall was *Jonathan,* with the song of "Yankee Doodle," and "Marie, with the Indian Death song" was Mrs. Henderson. "Washington's Counsel Forever, Huzza!" was stirringly sung by Mr. Clifford.

This patriotic programme with an American comedy: One of the new national songs, "Yankee Doodle," which must have jumped into immediate popularity, and "Washington's Counsel Forever, Huzza!" with the enthusiasm always enkindled by the name of "The Father of his Country," and the added interest of the author's singing his own composition as a member of the theatrical company — must have been an unusually thrilling presentation, and its reception probably kept the principal actors continuously in obeisance before the footlights.

In conformity with the "horsey" spirit abroad, "High-Mettled Races" was the principal song at the theatre on February 12, sung by Mr. J. West; the opera of "Love in a Village" opened the evening's performance, and Country dances and "The King and the Miller of Mansfield" concluded it.

A card in the *Gazette* of February 14, reads:

Mr. Gornet (evidently a member of the theatre orchestra) respectfully informs the gentlemen amateurs of music in this city, that he will (during the residence of Messrs. West and Bignall here), give lessons on the violin, Tenor, and Violincello, also the German flute, clarionet, and Bassoon. His terms may be known by applying at Monsieur Audin's near the old Market, Broad Street.
N. B. Harpsichords, piano-fortes, etc., judiciously tuned, music neatly copied or taken from the voice and adapted for any instrument."

"By desire of several ladies and gentlemen," this evening, February 14, will be presented the Comedy of "She Stoops to Conquer," to which will be added the comic opera of the "Quaker or May-Day Dower."

February 15 — "Such Things Are", or the "Christian Sultan" — Songs by Messrs. West and Clifford and the musical farce, "The Waterman;" concluding (by desire) a double Allamande and Scotch Reel. Doors to be

opened at five o'clock and the performance to begin at half after six precisely.

"The Waterman" was a ballad-opera by Dibdin and had its first production in America for Mrs. Pownall's benefit in New York in 1793.

At this time, all the pages of the *Gazette* show advertisements of one of Charleston's greatest gastronomic delicacies — "Green Turtle!" "A fine green turtle will be dressed This Day at the Coffee-House. Families can be supplied by sending their servants from 12 till 2 o'clock."

"Jane Shore," "Miss in her Teens," "Dish of All Sorts," by Mr. Bignall, and several surprising feats of manly activity, by Mr. M. Sully, "who was justly the admiration of Britain," and Clown, Mr. Murray.

"Variety alone gives joy," and the eighteenth century theatre patrons insisted upon spice and zest, and they always got their full money's worth.

The next bill follows:

BY AUTHORITY
Charleston Theatre
This Evening, February 19th,
Will be presented —
Mr. Sheridan's celebrated Comedy of "The School for Scandal"
Sir Peter Teazle, Mr. J. Kenna
Sir Oliver Surface, Mr. Hamilton
Joseph Surface, Mr. J. Bignall
Sir Benjamin Backbite, Mr. M. Sully [Matthew, Jr.]
Rowley, Mr. Henderson
Crabtree, Mr. Sully [Sr.]
Careless, with a Song, Mr. J. West
Trip, Mr. Clifford
Moses, Mr. Riffetts
Snake, Mr. Murray,
Servant, Mr. C. Sully, [Chester]
and Charles Surface, Mr. Hallam (being his first appearance)
Mrs. Candour, Mrs. Edgar
Lady Sneerwell, Mrs. Murray
Maria, Miss Sully [Elizabeth]

Maid, Miss J. Sully [Julia — later Mrs Belzons]
and Lady Teazle, Mrs. Bignall (being her first appearance this season)

A Song by Mr. J. West
To which will be added
The admired Musical Entertainment of
"The Romp,
or Love in a City"
Witty Cockney, Mr. Bignall
Old Cockney, Mr. Murray
Capt. Sightly, Mr. J. West
and, Old Barnacle, Mr. J. Kenna
Miss LaBlonde, Mrs. Chambers
Penelope, Miss Sully
and Priscilla Tomboy, the Romp, Mrs. Bignall.

The Mr. Hallam who made his first appearance in Charleston as *Charles Surface* was young Mirvan Hallam, son of Lewis Hallam 2d, by his first wife. His first appearance on the stage was as *Belcour* in "The West Indian" at the New York Theatre in 1793. This grandson of the original Manager of the old American Company was not possessed of much ability and added no lustre to the family name.

"Sylvanus" was appearing once a week with two-and-a-half-column articles against the Theatre. On February 12 he offered an "Expostulation with the Managers of Theatres," which was answered in the same issue by "An Episcopalian," as follows, under the title:

"THE GOOD EFFECTS ARISING FROM A WELL-REGULATED THEATRE."

It gives bread to the poor bricklayer, carpenter, painter, glazier, upholsterer; to the Poor milliner, mantua-maker, barber, taylor, fruiterer. It gives bread to many idle persons who perform on the stage, who would otherwise be a pest to themselves and society. It assists the poor musicians. It gives many fine girls an opportunity of showing themselves to great advantage, who have no pew or seat in a meeting or church, to show themselves on Sundays.

A pleasing comedy dispels vapours, gloomy apprehensions, hypocondriac complaints, and especially revives the spirits after receiving many sharp duns during the day..... It corrects awkwardness in young ladies, teaches them politeness, and gives them confidence..... It even makes old maids dress and bridle up, giving them still hopes they'll not lead apes.

Mr. Humphrey's celebrated comedy of "The Way to Keep Him, or Man in Love with his own Wife," was the leading offering at the theatre for February 21. "Between the II and IV Acts Mr. Francisquy will perform a Pastoral Dance and sing the Marseillais Hymn, and between the Play and the farce he will dance a Hornpipe. 'The Mansion of Peace,' a song by Mr. Chambers; and a comic song by Mr. Henderson, to which will be added O'Keef's laughable farce of " 'Peeping Tom of Coventry.' "

Seilhamer says that Mr. Chambers made his first appearance at Baltimore July 25, 1796, as *Walter* in "Children of the Wood," whereas he was performing *three years before, during the Charleston Theatre's first season.*

On February 24, "Macbeth" and the comedy, "The Pannel, or Masked Apparition," were given; Mr. Edgar playing *Macbeth* and Mrs. West, *Lady Macbeth.*

The next day, February 25, West and Bignall were moved to address the Editors of the *Gazette* in behalf of the unfortunate Americans who were captive in Algiers:

> Observing a piece in your city *Gazette* of yesterday, we feel an inducement to offer a poor but willing mite for the relief of our distressed fellow-citizens, captives in Algiers, whose sufferings are expressed by HUMANUS with a humanity that can never be forgot whilst susceptibility retains the smallest part of the heart.
>
> We beg the state treasurer's acceptance (for their use) a benefit clear of all expenses whatever, and shall consider ourselves highly gratified to be ranked amongst the number of Charleston's philanthropists, who with open hands, always relieve the distressed, and consider in an essential manner every child of sorrow as their brother.
>
> West and Bignall.

The generosity of the Charleston public was set forth in another column of the same *Gazette,* advertizing the

Grand Concert to be given by the St. Cecilia Society "For the benefit of the distressed inhabitants of St. Domingo, now in the city."

A comedy "never performed here" of "The School for Wives, or The Faithful Irishman," and "The Flitch of Bacon" were performed on February 26.

A recognition of the generous offer of Messrs. West and Bignall for the Algerian captives was made in the issue of the 27th:

For the City *Gazette*:

To the Manager of the Charleston Theatre: —

Gentlemen: — Among the many liberal traits already discovered in your character, your generous offer on Tuesday last, deserves our highest admiration. We cannot longer hesitate to pronounce it as our confirmed opinion, that while the Theatre continues under your management, it will not only be useful but extensively beneficial. While the orphan is fed by your charity, your enslaved countrymen liberated by your bounty, you may rest secure the heart of every philanthropist will be a protection against the shafts of a Sylvanus, and whilst he is dealing out his invectives against you, extend your charity to all mankind."

A number of Citizens.

O'Keefe's "Castle of Andalusia" and the farce of "The Merry Mourners" were the theatre attractions for February 28, and on that day the managers must have been gratified with this communication to the *Gazette*, although somewhat fulsome.

TO THE MANAGERS OF THE CHARLESTON THEATRE—

GENTLEMEN:—

The citizens of Charleston, always happy to patronize your laudable endeavors to please and amuse them, entertain a very high opinion of the goodness and humanity of your hearts, in coming forward as soon as the voice of sorrow was heard in our streets, to relieve suffering merit in a foreign land.

That tribute of your attention to the truly unfortunate, independent of the many other instances of your well-timed liberality, very justly entitle you to the veneration and esteem of every friend to humanity whose heart has been accustomed to feel, perhaps to bleed for another's woes, and certain we are, that there is no object in the world that God can be supposed to look down upon with more pleasure and delight, than the divine attribute of charity; ever

ready, ever happy to stretch out the hand of pity and compassion to the sons and daughters of affliction without exception.

What an example for imitation ! ! !
Five Hundred Citizens.

"Monsieur Francisque" one of the lately arrived Play-actors advertized his services for those "who wish to learn the agreeable art of dancing in both the English stile and the French."

"The School for Wives" was repeated March 3, with Mrs. Inchbald's favorite comedy in three Acts called "Animal Magnetism, or No Magnet like Love," with songs by Messrs. Clifford and Sully.

A most lurid and sensational bill appeared necessary to forestall "thin" houses, so on March 5, "The Wonder," Mrs. Centlivre's comedy of "A Woman Keeps a Secret," was followed by a Grand Spectacle called: "Don Juan, or the Libertine Destroyed," which was to be given as originally played and produced by Mr. Garrick, and performed at Drury Lane Theatre and Haynes' Circus "with a variety of new scenery, machinery, dresses and decoration."

A column advertisement sets forth the unusual attraction, and just reward for his infamy, of the libertine who is bound in chains by the furies and thrown into the flames of the fiery abyss: "This ends one of the finest morals and grandest spectacles that ever was exhibited at any Theatre."

On the 6th of March occurred the Grand Concert of the St. Cecilia Society for the San Domingans. It was held at the Theatre and the programme was largely filled by members of the theatrical company. Songs by Mr. Chambers, Mr. West and Mr. Clifford, and Mrs. Chambers. Sonata on the Piano Forte by Mrs. Sully.

The Society gave the Grand Overture, Haydn; Overture, Gretris; Overture, LaChasse, Goffet, and Concerto Violin by Mr. Petit. M. Francisque and M. Dainville, M. et Mme. Val. gave a grand Ballet, and the entertainment concluded with "Manly Feats of activity by Mr. M. Sully."

Although no criticism appears of the "Don Juan" production, it was probably hailed with enthusiasm by the lovers of the sensational for it was repeated at the next performance on March 7, preceded by the old favorite "Douglas."

A vitriolic notice of the note signed by Five Hundred Citizens — commending Bignall and West for their offer of a benefit for the Americans held captive in Algiers—appeared in the *Gazette* of the 8th ultimo, doubting that such a number of citizens signed such a note: "The truth is you begin to tremble for the shaking interest of the theatre. Many who have visited it acknowledge themselves converts to the sound reasoning of Sylvanus; and many more, enlightened by their own good sense, are convinced that the amusements of the stage are unfriendly to morality, often shocking to decency and good manners, and disgusting to every chaste and virtuous ear."

Notwithstanding objections, "Don Juan" was repeated March 10, headed by "Robin Hood, or Sherwood Forest." This was McNally's arrangement, mainly popular on account of the excellent musical setting given it by Shields, but there has always been a certain glamour over Robin Hood and his merry men.

On February 12, "Cato," and Colly Cibber's "Hob in the Well, or the Humours of a Country Wake," conclud-

ing with "Surprizing Feats of Activity, by the celebrated Signor Joseph Doctor, from Sadler's Wells, being his first appearance in America." After describing some of his ground and lofty tumbling, Equilibriums and Postures in a note the public is informed that "The Grand serious Pantomime of 'The Death of Capt. Cook' is in rehearsal and will shortly be ready for representation."

This was Doctor's initial performance in this country; he was pantomimist, expert gymnast and tumbler and sometimes billed as "Signor Doctor, the celebrated Spaniard." He and his wife took minor "speaking rôles" in a number of the plays.

It is interesting to note in this issue of the *Gazette* the strides that wood-cut illustrations for papers had made. Beginning with crude little ships and run-away slaves, from which the "Gold-Dust Twins" seem to have evolved, there appears in the *City Gazette* of March 11 a most attractive picture heading the Circus advertisement and "Feats of Horsemanship" of two well-drawn running horses with the further illustration: "Mr. Ricketts will this evening dart through a blazing sun suspended twelve feet high and recover his situation on the other side, as depictured above!"

March 14 — "The Busybody" introducing Mrs. Doctor as *Scantwell*, "being her first appearance on any stage," and "a farce never performed here" called "The Farm House, or the Country Lanes."

March 15 — a card from West & Bignall, inclines one to believe that one of Charleston's periodical hurricanes occurred on the 14th.

At the Charleston Theatre on the 17th were presented

Mrs. Rowe's Tragedy of "The Fair Penitent" and Mrs. Inchbald's laughable farce, "The Midnight Hour, or War of Wits."

The works of these two women playwrights were among the most popular of their time, one in tragedy and the other in comedy. Ever since Mrs. Cibber's translation of "The Oracle" women had been turning out successful English plays and adaptations of French plays.

The advent of the French in Charleston was a menace to the Charleston Theatre from the initial performance there of M. Francisquy, et al. — through the courtesy of Messrs. West & Bignall, whom they were to incommode and hamper seriously in their theatre's activities.

Wednesday, March 19, 1794 —

On Wednesday night two French seamen, who appeared to be intoxicated, attended the theatre, and, behaving in a rude and indecent manner, were turned out by force of the audience. This instance exciting indignation in them they returned to their comrades, who, by their representations were induced to believe that they had been grossly insulted. In consequence of which, about thirty, with drawn swords, repaired to the theatre, rushed in and excited general terror and confusion by a furious and indiscriminate attack on the audience, who immediately fled in all directions! A part of the city guard attempting to quell the rioters were overpowered (three of whom were wounded) and giving way alarmed the citizens by ringing bells and beating to arms, who, with their usual alertness, assembled at their respective alarm-posts, and by proper exertions apprehended several of the rioters and restored tranquility to the city. The rioters were yesterday tried by the City Council, who fined some of them and bound others over to keep the peace.

It is hoped that the frequent and recent riots that have happened in the city will prove a stimulus to its officers to put in force those ordinances which particularly enjoin all seamen to repair on board their vessels at the appointed hour, without respect of persons, and that proper measures may be adopted to prevent their wearing side arms on shore which will eventually be a.....[1] instead of alienating the affections of Frenchmen and Americans! !

[1] Words blurred in the printing.

The Relief Benefit was announced as follows:

CHARLESTON THEATRE
This Evening, the 19th instant,
Will be presented
Towards the Relief of American
CAPTIVES IN ALGIERS
Sir Richard Steele's elegant and sentimental
Comedy of "The
Conscious Lover"

Young Bevil, ...Mr. Edgar
Myrtle, ...Mr. Hallam
Mr. Sealand, ...Mr. J. Kenna
Cimberton, ...Mr. Hamilton
Sir John Bevil, ...Mr. Henderson
Humphrey, ...Mr. Murray
Daniell, ...Mr. M. Sully
And, Tom, Young Bevil's Servant, ...Mr. Bignall
Phillis, ...Mrs. Henderson
Mrs. Sealand, ...Mrs. Edgar
Isabella, ...Mrs. Murray
Lucinda, ...Miss Sully
And, Indiana, ...Mrs. Bignall

A Song by Mr. Henderson
Between the Play and Farce
"The Follies of the Time"
by Mr. Marriott
To which will be added a Farce,
never performed in America, called
"The Spoil'd Child"

Little Pickle (the Spoiled Child) with Songs, ...Mrs. Bignall
Tag, ...Mr. Bignall
John, ...Mr. Henderson
Thomas, ...Mr. Murray
And, Old Pickle, ...Mr. J. Kenna
Maria, ...Miss Sully
Susan, ...Mrs. Henderson
Margery, ...Mrs. Murray
And, Mrs. Pickle, ...Mrs. Edgar

Boxes 5s. 10d. Pit 5s. Gallery 3s. 6d.

This initial performance in America of Bickerstaff's popular piece, in which young actresses delighted to play the part of *Little Pickle,* was given in New York by the Old American Company on June 23 of the same year for the benefit of Mr. Ashton.

AN APOLOGY

Messrs. Markland, McIver & Co. : —
You will oblige me by inserting my apology in your *Gazette.*
Amand Fosse.

To the Citizens of Charleston: —

The subscriber, impressed with a sense of shame for his ungentlemanly like conduct at the Theatre, does thus publicly beg pardon of the ladies and gentleman he may have offended there, and also of the inhabitants at large, for having been the cause, in part, of that night's disturbances; and to such a degree are his feelings wounded by the recollection of it, that he wishes he had paid for it by the loss of his life. He thanks Capt. T. Morris, Light Dragoons, for their generous protection, and had not some mean, cowardly fellow knocked him down with a loaded whip, it is probably nothing of the kind would have happened. N. B. I think it but just to say that the whole blame is only to be laid on myself, Doby and Marie.

A. F.

March 20th.

Henry Brooke's Tragedy of "Gustavus Vasa, or The Deliverer of his Country" struck a patriotic note which was acceptable to all. This rescuer of his country from the oppression of the Danes and likened unto the "American Cincinnatus" was an offering higher in the scale than the perfidious actions of "Don Juan" albeit he received merited punishment. The bill for the day, March 21, remarks: "This elegant Tragedy breathes throughout the strongest spirit of Liberty and Patriotic Zeal; and is truly worthy of representation on the American Stage." This was followed by the "Italian Serpentine" of the celebrated Mr. Joseph Doctor, and O'Keefe's Farce of "Patrick in Prussia."

March 22 — Never performed here before, Pitou's Comedy "He would be a Soldier," and the farce, "High Life Below Stairs," followed by a Mock Minuet by Mr. Hallam and Mrs. Chambers.

A card from Mrs. Marriott mentions her new farce just written, "The Chimera, or Effusions of Fancy," and states that the book will contain part of the first volume of her Poems. Mrs. Marriott's Farce, which was published in Charleston and announced March 25, was used as the benefit performance for herself and

husband at the Southwark Theatre in Philadelphia, November 17, during the old American Company's last season.

A serious rivalry now threatened the Charleston Theatre in the announcement on March 26, just below their bill of the day — of the contemplated opening of the French Theatre, in the course of the week, with the first performance for the benefit of "their unfortunate brethren, the American prisoners in Algiers."

On that day was printed the evening's offering at the Charleston Theatre — "The celebrated Comedy (never performed here) called the 'Chapter of Accidents, or The Humorous Mistake.' This elegant comedy is the production of Miss Lee (authoress of 'The Recess,' a novel so universally known and admired that a commentary on it would be entirely superfluous). It is allowed by the most learned and impartial critics to have a genuine flow of innocent humor, sound argument, and refined sentiment — to which will be added the farce of 'Barnaby Brittle, or A Wife at her Wit's Ends'."

On the 31st of the month the amount of the Benefit tendered by West and Bignall was announced:

William Hort, Esq., State Treasurer —

Dear Sir: The benefit for American Captives in Algiers amounts to 256 pounds, 2s. 6d., which sum shall be paid at any hour you may please to appoint. We thank in an especial manner the liberal Charlestonians who on this (and every other) deserving occasion, have so radiantly shone forth in the grand lustre of humanity, and if a frozen eye has been taught the tear of pity, by which the unhappy may be relieved, our gratification is complete. We remain, dear Sir, with every possible mark of respect and esteem,

Yours sincerely and obediently,
West and Bignall.

To which a very polite answer was returned, and shortly after, the following receipt:

State Treasurer's office, Charleston.
March 25th, 1794.

Messrs. West and Bignall,

Gentlemen:— I acknowledge the receipt of your generous gift in this office of the sum of 256 pounds, 2s. 6d., sterling, for the relief of our fellow citizens in Algiers, and shall, in my official capacity, make due report to the legislature of this additional proof of your attention to the cause of humanity and to the relief of the distressed.

I am, with due respect, Gentlemen,
Your most obedient servant,
William Fort.

CHARLESTON THEATRE

This Evening, the 31st instant, will be presented (by particular desire) the admired comedy of "The Dramatist, or Stop him who can" — Songs, and, by particular desire for the last time this season, the grand spectacle called "Don Juan, or the Libertine Destroyed."

On the 4th of May — the celebrated comic opera "The Surrender of Calais, or Gallic Heroism," with original music composed by Dr. Arnold. Views of the English camp and Intrenchments — The Fortifications of Calais and a striking view of the Gates of Calais (painted from an original picture of the celebrated Hogarth), through which the melancholy procession moves to the scaffold!

"The Beaux' Stratagem," by Farquhar, April 9, to which was added the grand serious pantomime (under the immediate direction of M. & M. Sully) of "The Death of Captain Cooke" in the island of O-Wy-Hee in the Pacific Ocean — with the original music, marches, dances, decorations, etc. The scenery painted by Mr. Oliphant of this city. The whole to conclude with an awful representation of a —

"Burning Mountain!"

The advertisement of the French Theatre was on the adjoining column, for April 12, the Benefit promised for the American Prisoners in Algiers.

The Charleston Theatre advertized on April 10, "The last night of performing till Easter Monday —

Tomorrow Evening, the 11th instant, will be Presented the Comedy of "The Road to Ruin." To which will be added the Grand Serious Pantomime of "The Death of Captain Cooke," etc.

With two theatres in Charleston and the glamour of the new play-house to attract audiences, for a while, at least, the difficulties of Messrs. West and Bignall thickened. The following open letter appeared on April 10.

To Messieurs West and Bignall, Managers of the Charleston Theatre:

We are of a nation accustomed to receive answers to polite and reasonable letters and it is moreover customary with all civilized people. Consequently, we request of you, to approach from that distance you seem to conceive there is between you and the performers employed at your orchestre, and to insert in the next *Gazette* an answer, which as yet you owe to the letter received from us on the 1st inst., of which here is annexed a true and exact copy.

"The Citizens Brunet, Daguetty and Lécat, to Messrs. West and Bignall, Managers of the South Carolina and Virginia Company of Comedians:

"In order to conform strictly with our articles (not only as a written agreement, but an affair of honor) which forbids us from performing as musicians in any other company whatsoever, without your written permission, we beg of you that such a leave may be granted to us for M. Placide, whose performances are nearly to be opened. We have reason to believe our request will not be refused, as by agreeing with you, it was only your purpose to bind our talents and abilities as far as they could essentially promote to establish any other company, which pretension, it is true, would tend to offend your interest; but in this nature of things, we may be employed as musicians at the said performance, as neither our presence or absence could forbid it from being done and performed. You are conscious we were involved in the unfortunate fate of St. Domingo; your performances in Virginia were such that you could not give us more than seven or eight dollars a week; with such a salary we were obliged to provide for all our necessities, to defray our travelling expenses, though we do not receive money from you but from the drawing of the curtain to its fall, in every town or place where your interest may call you.

"Therefore, Gentlemen, we now apply to you, hoping (as distressed citizens of St. Domingo) that you will not refuse us to make a little money with Mr. Placide, which in some measure would compensate for our losses, without laying any out from your pockets. We beg you will be so kind as to give us, as soon as possible, your written answer; and we assure you your theatrical performances, so far from being neglected, shall be as before, our first business and most sacred duty.

Extra Expenses of the subscribers: —

		Dollars
1.	From Norfolk to Richmond, ...	6
2.	From Richmond to Charleston, ...	20
3.	Two Weeks without performing, from Norfolk to Richmond, at seven dollars per week,.....	14
4.	Five weeks without performing, from Norfolk to Richmond and Charleston, at eight dollars a week, ...	40
5.	Besides the Passion Week, which you have excepted from our salaries, ...	10
	Dollars —	90

Independent of the contents of the above letter, it is to be observed that of thirteen performers who compose the orchestra of the Charleston Theatre there are nine whom Messrs. West and Bignall have absolutely no right whatever to prevent from playing for M. Placide; and surely it must appear unjust, that the subscribers after having supported Messrs. West and Bignall's theatres at Norfolk and Richmond (where they could not provide themselves with other musicians) they should become victims to any disappointment which Messrs. West and Bignall might experience at the establishment of a second theatre in the city of Charleston. However, to judge between them and us, we think we cannot act with a greater degree of propriety than to refer our difference to the judgment of those to whom (from their station in life) they are to submit to; that is to say, the candid Public."

Lécat, Brunet, Daguetty.

April 10th, 1794.

This brought forth a reply in the next morning's paper:

TO THE PUBLIC:

It is with the utmost reluctance we are now found to intrude upon a generous public, by this address, ever conscious of the distant situation between us and our supporting fellow citizens, our sensations are the more wounded in being obliged to trouble them with differences between us and those we may employ for their amusement and pleasure, but though we hold it incumbent upon us to apologize for thus troubling our friends, we are certain of their generosity in their acceptance, and especially it being the privileged right of every class of men to support their characters and prevent unfavorable impressions being made against them on the public mind.

The letter addressed to us by the citizens B., D., and L., we deemed improper, unreasonable, and indeed not quite grateful. Actuated, as we ever have been, by the same emanations of liberality and benevolence which so universally pervaded the bosoms of our fellow citizens, and so eminently displayed itself through the whole of the United States towards our suffering brethren of St. Domingo, we have not failed to throw in our mite accompanied by sincere compassion; and we only lamented that our ability could not keep pace with our wish to serve them.

The performers now addressing us, did in their extreme indigence apply for employ for bread; our occasion for their services by no means equalled our desire to relieve them from distress; this we attempted — thus are we rewarded.

The variety of musical pieces which are encumbent upon us to present to liberal audiences, renders frequent rehearsals indispensable, and we are determined to spare neither expense or trouble in giving every polish to the pieces we exhibit which our exertions will enable us to accomplish; it necessarily follows that a relaxation from the duty to our patrons in those engaged in their service is inadmissible. However, as an assistance to, or employment of the

gentlemen who have appeared with so much publicity in your paper, seems no longer useful to them, they are free to pursue that line they conceive best adapted to their interest; we can dispense with their services, and on our parts are willing to cancel every tie under which they stand engaged to the public's obliged and devoted servants,

West and Bignall.

The Charleston Theatre on the 11th printed its last bill "till Easter Monday on account of Passion Week" — "The Road to Ruin" and "Death of Captain Cooke." The days of performing in Easter week were Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Saturday.

"Osmyn," having lately arrived here from a distant part of the continent, had perused some of the anti-theatrical effusions of "Sylvanus," and in the *Gazette* of April 16 takes up the cudgels vigorously for the Theatre, and suggests:

"If this gentleman's situation is correspondent with his signature why does he not confine himself to the woods and not intrude so often and unwish'd for, on the patience of the public?"

The orchestras of the two theatres had Passion Week free from engagements, so they had time to decide the personnel of the musical corps of each theatre when the performances should again be on, beginning with Easter Monday. There is no record as to whether the three French musicians with "the Charleston" — Lécat, Brunet, and Daguetty—decided to remain where first engaged, or went over to the French Theatre. The Charleston Theatre on Easter Monday presented the Tragedy of "Romeo and Juliet," with a Masquerade Dance in Act II — "Manly, Surprising Feats of Activity" by the Messieurs (note the influence of the French players) Sullys, Mr. Doctor, etc., and the musical farce, "No Song, No Supper."

It would be very interesting to know the comparative strength of the rival houses, and which was the "thinner." It is rather surprising that at that day when the white population of Charleston was comparatively so small, two theatres were supported at all.

On Thursday, April 24, "The Charleston" presented a new comedy to its patrons, "The Heiress;" Mr. J. West had the song, and the farce was "The Devil to Pay."

The war against the theatre by "Sylvanus" and "Urbanus" was aided by "One of Your Readers," who sent to the *Gazette* the petition of a number of the clergy of the city of Philadelphia, for the "enacting of a law to prevent theatrical exhibitions of every sort," with the request that it should be copied — which it was. It must have been discouraging in the face of this to find the Charleston Theatre running a full column bill and the French Theatre the half column adjoining.

"Shakespeare's Jubilee" was set forth in full "with all the necessary decorations," and at the end of the first act the Grand Pageant "as performed at Stratford-upon-Avon in commemoration of The Immortal Shakespeare," and the full order of the Pageant following.

Under a heading the width of the column:

THEATRE

Fourteen additional shares in the Charleston Theatre are for sale, at the original subscription, by

W. P. Young.

April 28th.

This showed that West and Bignall were affected by the new theatre and the relentless war waged against theatrical representations — the first of the kind in the city's history.

Mrs. Sully, in a card just below the Theatre notice, "proposes instructing a few ladies on the pianoforte during her residence in Charleston," etc. The bill for the evening sets forth an allurement in the shape of a play "never performed here" — "A Bold Stroke for a Husband," and the farce "Ways and Means, or A Trip to Dover."

Toward the close of a discouraging season the Managers probably spent sleepless nights conjuring up some sensation that might entice a public wavering between two opinions — "To go, or not to go."

The *Gazette* of April 29, contained this:

— PROLOGUE —

To the Historical Play of "Columbus, or a World Discovered."

When famed Columbus nobly dared to brave
The untry'd perils of the Western wave,
The thousand dangers in his passage lay,
Dark was his night, and dreary was his day!
The rude companions of his bold design,
Fatigu'd with toil, against their chief combine: —
When sudden — bursting on the astonish'd view!
A World Discover'd, prov'd his judgment true.
"Yet black ingratitude, the great man's fate,
Pursu'd Columbus with envenom'd hate;
But minds like his, a base degenerate race
Might meanly persecute, but not disgrace;
The nobler soul its energy maintains,
In spite of dungeons, tyranny and chains."
The sons of Europe found a guileless race,
No fraud was veil'd beneath the smiling face;
Their manners mild, benevolent and kind,
Portrayed the cloudless sunshine of the mind;
Bless'd in their princes' patriarchal reign,
Whose power reliev'd, but ne'er inflicted pain,
Their placid lives no fancy'd evils knew,
Their joys were many, and their wants were few;
One custom with their virtues ill agreed,
Which made Humanity with anguish bleed;
Compell'd at Superstition's shrine to bow,
The hapless victims of a cruel vow!
Their sweetest maids were often doom'd to prove
No joy in friendship, nor no bliss in love!
Yet love and nature cannot be suppress'd
The sigh will heave and palpitate the breast;

For spite of vows which Heaven's wise laws disown,
Love sits triumphant on the heart — his throne!
And breaks those fetters biggots would impose
To aggravate the sense of human woes!!
The rigid laws of time and place, our bard,
In this night's dream ventures to discard:
If here he errs — he errs with him whose name
Stands without rival on the rolls of fame;
Him whom the passions own with one accord,
Their great dictator and despotic Lord!
Who plac'd aloft on Inspiration's throne,
Made Fancy's Magic kingdom all his own;
Burst from the trammels which his muse confin'd,
And pour'd the wealth of his exhaustless mind!
Though Shakespeare's flight no mortal can pursue,
Columbus' story, patroniz'd by you
Will yield an off'ring grateful to his dust,
A blooming laurel on a hero's bust!"

The French Theatre and the Charleston Theatre, each with three performances a week, generally on alternate evenings, seemed able to hold audiences every night, and the Charlestonians, who acted as they saw fit, and refused to have their amusements meted out to them by any Sylvanus or Urbanus, must have sufficiently filled both houses to enable them to keep open doors without loss.

On May 7, the Charleston Theatre gave a column advertisement of the evening's presentation — the Reverend Dr. Hoadly's "Suspicious Husband," followed by the "much esteemed pantomime entertainment of 'Robinson Crusoe or Harlequin Friday';" with entire new scenery, dresses and decorations. The scenery painted by Mr. Oliphant. A full description follows of the pantomime, "including every remarkable and surprising incident of this well known and admired history of Robinson Crusoe." After the dance of the savages, "the horrid ceremony of the intended death of Friday; and the laughable scene of Friday's escape as Harle-

quin, the whole to conclude with 'Fancy's Bower and a Garland Dance by the characters'."

Dryden's arrangement of the "Tempest, or the Enchanted Island," is fully described in the bill of May 12. "The Midnight Hour, or War of Wits," was the farce.

The Charleston Theatre presented, on May 14, "The Tragedy of Alexander the Great" with the "grand Banquet scene and the triumphal entry of Alexander into Babylon." The popular farce of "Robinson Crusoe" concluded the performance.

May 16, was given a new comedy "never performed in America before," called "How to grow Rich, or Modern Days;" and the farce, "The Widow's Vow, or Second Thoughts are Best."

Reynold's Comedy, "How to grow Rich," was performed in New York for the first time on May 5, for the benefit of Mrs. Hallam. West and Bignall were unaware of this performance antedating their announcement by ten days, for the companies were evidently rehearsing the piece at the same time and probably neither knew the first day of performance of the other.

The Frenchmen were a thorn in the side of West and Bignall, and, by harboring disaffected members of their company, were causing them very much trouble. A card with large headlines states: "Mr. and Mrs. Marriott beg leave to inform the ladies and gentlemen of Charleston, that on account of a recent disagreement at the English Theatre, and as Mr. Placide has kindly offered them his theatre for a Benefit, they have availed themselves of such offer, and hope the generous

HARRIET SULLY, LATER MRS. PORCHER
(BY THOMAS SULLY)

public of Charleston will favor Mr. and Mrs. M. with their support on such occasion."

May 19. The Benefits began on May 21, the first for Mr. J. Kenna with "Lionel and Clarissa, or the School for Fathers," and "Neck or Nothing" with Songs by his special friends; a Sea Song, "My Pull and my Partner Joe," by Mr. M. Sully. The comic songs of "Lingo" and "Cowslips Wading", dressed in character of Lingo, by Mr. J. Kenna; and, by "particular desire," the Indian Death Song, "The Sun Sets in Night," to be sung, dressed in character, by Mr. J. West.

Each actor who was to have a benefit marshaled his very strongest forces and enlisted the particular services of all his friends in the company to set forth an unusually tempting array as a bait to the public.

On May 23, the Charleston Theatre gave a bewildering number of "public inducements" in the benefit performance of Miss Sully and Miss J. Sully, to counteract the bill offered by their seceders, Mr. and Mrs. Marriott. The first was "A Musical Comedy, never performed in America, called 'A Day in Turkey, or the Russian Slaves;' with the following scenery executed purposely for this piece; the Garden of the Bassa, decorated with palms, fountains, etc., in the eastern stile and a 'Grand Canopy and Wide Court'," by Mr. Oliphant.

An infant prodigy was next brought forth. "A favorite song, from the opera of 'Peeping Tom,' by Miss H. Sully, a child of only five years of age. The celebrated pantomime (never performed in America before) called 'The Fairy Gambols, or Harlequin's Restoration'." Miss H. Sully was little Harriet, who be-

came in due time the wife of Dr. Porcher of Charleston.

The Dying scene, the Skeleton scene, the Garland Dance, and, "for the last time," the Double Allemande.

May 25. Mr. Hamilton, "with the greatest respect, informed the ladies and gentlemen of Charleston" of his benefit performance that evening, presenting "by particular desire of his friends" the "celebrated Comedy written by Mr. Cumberland, called, 'The Fashionable Lover, or Faithful Scotchman,' one of the most finished dramatic productions that ever appeared on the stage, etc. Songs by Mr. Henderson, Mr. West and Mr. Sully, and a farce 'never performed here' written by Charles Macklin, and called 'The True-Born Irishman, or The Irish Fine Lady'." This had made its first appearance in America in January of the same year among the plays of the old American Company in New York.

Mr. J. West's Benefit performance on May 28, consisted of the comedy of "Wild Oats" and the musical opera the "Quaker," with songs by Messrs. West and Henderson.

"Wild Oats," which had its first American production in 1793, was one of the most successful comedies of the epoch, and in it O'Keefe had put both laughter and tears, but so happily contrasted as to make it one of the most popular of American plays.

Mr. Hallam's Benefit was on the 30th, when was presented the comedy "More Ways than One, or A New Way to Catch Hearts."

"Bucks Have at Ye All" by Mr. Hallam and the farce of the "Poor Soldier," the whole to conclude with a "comic dance in character of a Dwarf three feet high, by Mr. Hallam."

June 2. "Mr. Edgar most respectfully informs the ladies and gentlemen of Charleston and its environs that he has selected such entertainments for his benefit as he flatters himself will afford those who may condescend to favor him with their support, entire satisfaction," etc. His "entertainments" took up almost a column in the *Gazette,* and consisted of Dr. Brown's "Tragedy of Barbarossa, or the Fall of Algiers," *presented for the first time in America,* with a Prologue in the character of a Country Boy by Mr. Bignall, who also gave Hobby Horses. Mr. Edgar delivered a "Serio-Comic Dissertation on Taxation, as spoken by him at the theatres of Bath, Liverpool and London." *A new farce* (never performed here) called "A Trip to Scotland, or The Road to Matrimony," with numerous scenes of Gretna Green, to conclude with a country-dance of the characters, and couples passing to and from Gretna Green, led by Cupid.

Mr. Edgar's benefit advertisements were causing wide-spread interest in his evening. "Mr. Edgar respectfully informs his friends and the public that the report circulated on Saturday of all the box seats at the Theatre being taken up for this evening, was not true; several of the most advantageous seats are still disengaged and may be secured by applying early at the box office."

June 2 —

The benefit of Mr. and Mrs. Henderson contained a local offering of such an unusual nature that the bill will follow in full:

MR. AND MRS. HENDERSON
Respectfully inform the ladies and gentlemen
of Charleston that their benefit will be

This Evening, the 4th instant,
When will be presented
The Celebrated Comedy of "The
Provoked Husband,
Or a Journey to London"

Lord Townly, ...Mr. Bignall
Manly, ...Mr. Hallam
John Murray, ...Mr. J. Kenna
Squire Richard, ...Mr. Edgar
Count Basset, ...Mr. Sully
Poundage, ...Mr. Murray
Servant, ...Mr. Riffetts
Sir Francis Wronghead, ...Mr. Hamilton
Lady Wronghead, ...Mrs. Edgar
Miss Jenny, ...Mrs. Henderson
Lady Grace, ...Mrs. Murray
Trusty, ...Miss J. Sully
Motterly, ...Mrs. Doctor
Lady Townly, ...Mrs. West

Between the play and the farce
A Vocal Eulogium

In honor of the Uniform Companies of Charleston written by a gentleman of this town and to be sung by Mr. Henderson in the character of an American officer.

There will be presented a beautiful large Transparency, Devised and executed by one of the first artists in America.[1]

Description of the Painting

The front ground discovers President Washington alighted from his charger, who is presented with an enrolled list of the companies by the field-officers of the Charleston regiment. On the right, in their respective uniforms, ready for action — Battalion of Artillery, Cadet Artillery, Fusiliers, Volunteers, Charleston Blues, Forresters, Cadet Infantry, Light Infantry, Federalists, Grenadiers, Rangers.

On the left front in two columns, the first and second Troop of Horse, mounted and waiting the command to charge.

The front of the right hand column is led by two pieces of artillery, the background terminated with a distant view of the fort and a ship coming into the harbor.

The whole, at one view, exhibits a most grand and pleasing spectacle, expressive of that patriotic zeal and courage which has so justly raised to admiration our illustrious Washington, officers, etc., who so gloriously obtained the independence of these states, and whose continued ardor promises to secure to this country the blessings of peace and independence.

By desire, "Ik bin Liderlik, or the Dutch Fisherman," by Mr. Henderson. A new favorite song called the "Poor Little Gipsy," by Mrs. Henderson.

[1] It is a great disappointment to writers of the twentieth century that the accomplishments of writers and artists of the eighteenth century were often lost in anonymity.

To which will be added
By particular desire of many ladies and gentlemen
the long wish'd for farce
"Irish Widow"
(List of characters follow)
The Part of Widow Bradford, with the song —
Epilogue, by Mrs. Henderson.

How many hours were the early American audiences willing to spend at the theatre of an evening?

Mr. and Mrs. Murray's benefit on June 6 consisted of a Tragedy from the Celebrated "Horace" of Corneille (arranged by W. Whitehead, Esq.), and the Burletta of "Midas, or the Assembly of the Gods." There were real riches to choose from in those days of classic productions—genuinely inviting and inspiring repertoires.

Mr. M. Sully had advertized his Benefit performance for a month and the evening had now arrived, June 9, with his offering and that of Master C. Sully — O'Keefe's Comic opera of "The Highland Reel," concluded for the last time this season with Allemande and Scotch Reel. To which will be added a favorite Burletta Farce of one act (never performed here) called "Tit for Tat, or Love gets a Damper," a saucy, piquant little piece.

"Several new and enterprizing feats of activity" — one of which "Master C. Sully will turn somersaults twelve times with fire works fastened to different parts of his body. The whole to conclude with an Epilogue spoken in the character of Harlequin, and a surprizing leap through a balloon, surrounded with brilliant fire works," by Mr. M. Sully.

West and Bignall's company had to rack their brains, no doubt, to offer sufficiently startling and novel at-

tractions to keep pace with the nimble-witted Frenchmen, who were fighting them on their own ground.

The comic opera of the "Woodman" and the farce, "The Romp, or Love in a City", were given for Mrs. Doctor's benefit on June 11.

Many Charlestonians from the beginning of drama in their city took a personal share in the productions. On June 16, we read that for the opera the "Duenna," Sheridan's ever-popular composition, the accompaniments were by Mr. Bradford of this city — and it is probably to Mr. Bradford that Mr. Henderson refers in a card to the public, about "a song he was favored with from the author and in justice to whom, has since been published."

"The Duenna" and "All the World's a Stage" were given for Mrs. Bignall's benefit.

June 18, a card appeared which showed that the friends of the Orphan House were getting anxious for fear a benefit would not be given for that worthy institution, and with the Charleston Theatre an island in the middle of a sea of trouble, with the closing day in sight, it seemed to be asking a great favor from the Managers — and rather more fitting that it should be asked of the French Theatre which had drawn so largely from the patronage of the older house. The French influence was felt even in the following card:

TO THE MANAGERS OF THE CHARLESTON THEATRE —

Messieurs West and Bignall:

The season for theatrical operations being nearly finished, and no mention made for the benefit of the orphans, I hope you will, not take it amiss in being thus reminded of it; and though the heat of the weather at this time would be rather disagreeable to a large collection of spectators, yet there is no doubt but that the generous inhabitants of Charleston would overlook a trifling inconvenience,

to afford so considerable a succor to the innocent offspring of misfortune.

Humanicus.

West and Bignall had given a handsome sum for the relief of the Algerian sufferers, but they responded quickly and generously, offering a fine bill two days later.

Mr. Sully, Sr., chose for his benefit one of O'Keefe's comic operas, which were said to be clutchingly strong in the memory — although silly and meaningless.

June 18 "The Castle of Andalusia, or the Banditti," and the farce "never performed here", called "The Ghost, or the Dead Alive," was augmented by a comic dance called "The Trades," including fourteen characters and introducing a Comic Duet by Mr. Clifford and Mrs. Chambers.

The Benefit for the Orphans on June 20 brought forth one of West and Bignall's finest attractions:

"Mr. Sheridan's celebrated comedy of 'The School for Scandal,' and a farce never performed here but once, called 'Animal Magnetism.' An occasional address written by a gentleman of this city, to be spoken by Mrs. Bignall, and Songs by Messrs. Henderson and Clifford."

A card, signed "A Republican," was addressed to Messrs. West and Bignall on June 19: "An American National Military Piece for the stage, the subject of which has been, as noticed, 'The Seal of American Liberty,' was some time ago dedicated by the author to the Battalion of Charleston, his fellow citizens:

"Would you have any objection to lend your stage for this piece, to be performed only once during your

absence? In complying, you will oblige some Republicans."

An extra meeting of the Republican Society was called the next evening for business of importance. It is presumed that the members of this society were to be the amateur performers of the National Military Piece. The request was granted.

June 24 — A CARD

A thousand thanks to Messrs. West and Bignall for their late proof of respect and esteem given to the Republicans of Charleston. It is believed that such a generous proceeding towards a too kind nation shall never be forgotten, by the Battalions in particular having deserved by all possible means, to be treated as gentlemen." A Citizen.

In the first advertisement of Mrs. Edgar's Benefit, fixed for June 23, her husband takes the opportunity of explaining an invention which he has perfected:

"Mr. Edgar being informed that on the night of his benefit the audience were considerably inconvenienced with the heat, he has since that time been studying how to remedy the evil and is now most happy that he can announce to that public, whose liberality he has so particularly experienced, that he has completed an air-pump of such construction as to render the theatre pleasant and comfortable, even in cases of crowded audiences.

Mr. Edgar is indebted for his idea to the inventor of those air pumps that are often used on board ships of war,..... In public places in England, too, he has witnessed the utility of it, where its approved effect has been generally acknowledged..... .....It is so contrived as not to intercept the view of the audience; it indeed takes up a little room in the gallery, which then cannot hold as many as before, but the advantage which might arise from that, Mrs. Edgar cheerfully gives up for the general accommodation"..... It is presumed it will answer one happy effect, that of giving the idea he has borrowed, to more able hands for improvement," etc.

MRS. EDGAR'S BENEFIT, — JUNE 23 —

"The Countess of Salisbury," a celebrated Tragedy by Hall Hartson, Esq., presented here for the first time. A description of the piece follows and a cast of characters, Mr. Edgar playing *Alwin* and Mrs. Edgar in the title-role.

The much-admired musical entertainment, given here for the first time of "Thomas and Sally" — was preceded by "The Grecian Fabulist, or the Story of the Man, the Boy and the Ass," by Mrs. Bignall; a favorite comic song by Mr. Henderson — "Let Us All

be Unhappy Together," and "I'd rather be Excused," by Mrs. Henderson. A country dance with five couples and "by the pressing desire of many ladies and gentlemen, and for the first time in Charleston, a Double Hornpipe, by Mr. M. Sully and Miss Sully." [Matthew and Elizabeth.]

"The entertainment of this evening will be conducted in such manner that the whole will be concluded by ten minutes of eleven o'clock."

MESSRS. MARKLAND, M'IVER & COMPANY:

Your inserting the following paragraph in your useful and impartial paper will oblige — A Subscriber.

The return of Mr. Chambers to this city must certainly afford great pleasure to the frequenters of the Theatre, who have often experienced the justness of his performance. The absence of that gentleman has been the cause of many of the best pieces, (especially in the musical line,) not being performed, which the managers will give now, no doubt, notwithstanding the lateness of the season.

Mr. and Mrs. Chambers, after the first of this season had been playing in New York and Philadelphia.

A card appearing June 27 shows Mr. Clifford in a favorable light. "Mr. Chambers takes this public method of thanking Mr. Clifford for his generous mode of conduct in permitting him to defer his benefit, from a conviction it was in his power to have raised many objections. As Mr. Chambers has too good an opinion of Mr. Clifford to suppose he would accept of flattery for an act of generosity, he can only add that any additional patronage that gentleman may receive in consequence of his politeness, will be considered as an obligation conferred on himself."

Mr. McGrath, an old Charleston actor who had made his first appearance at Harmony Hall in 1787, had returned to Charleston after a sojourn in London, and took part in Mr. Clifford's benefit, which was given on June 27th, consisting of " 'The Rage for Liberty, or He would be a Soldier,' and between this and the farce,

'The Ghost,' and 'The Actor's Catch,' or the 'Harmonic Society' composed of the first vocal performers from the most capital cities in Europe.

"The 'Anacreontic Song' by Mr. Chambers; the much admired song from 'No Song, No Supper,' called 'My Lovely Sue,' or 'My Charming Bett,' by Mr. McGrath from London, who has done me the honor of his assistance in supporting my night. Duet—'Time has not thinned my flowing hair,' by Messrs. Clifford and McGrath."

The wording of these old Bills is sufficiently interesting to plead their excuse for appearing again before the world in this record of America's early productions. A twice-told tale sometimes gains in the retelling with a background of age.

The last performance for the season took place on June 30, for the benefit of Mrs. West, when was billed a Tragedy, called "All for Love, or The World Well Lost." Whoever made out the bill was not familiar with the productions given at the Southwark in Philadelphia, or the John-Street Theatre in New York, for each of these houses gave "All for Love" some years before, but it was probably offered for the first time in Charleston.

The description of it reads: "Written by that celebrated poet Dryden and considered by the critics the most complete dramatic piece of that justly admired author. The plot and general design is borrowed evidently from Shakespeare's Anthony and Cleopatra, whom he has greatly surpassed in point of regularity and poetic harmony."

Duets and the "Vauxhall Echo," a celebrated catch,

"Bullum versus Boatum," and a Dramatic Musical Romance by David Garrick and the music by Dr. Arne preceded "The Enchantress" with "Cymon and Sylvia" — and grand Chorus and Country Dance.

This was a notable season in many respects, for notwithstanding the many disagreeable situations in which the company were placed from time to time, the success which they achieved was sufficient to bring them back in the fall, and West and Bignall had labored to keep their performances up to the required standard, and in doing so had introduced to the American public twelve actors and actresses, and had brought forward a considerable number of new plays, which had been supplemented by local offerings of sufficient interest to be mentioned specifically in the bills.

Two weeks after the close of a hard-fought season by West and Bignall, Mr. Bignall died in Charleston on August 11.

Many tributes of respect to his memory, all mentioning his kind heart and "noble generosity," appeared in the papers of the day. West and Bignall had given two benefits for the Orphans and had turned over two handsome sums to the Commissioners of the Orphan House, and had proposed to perform one night annually for them in the future; and on this account the following letter to Mr. West will be of interest:

Orphan House, August 12, 1794.

Sir:—

The Commissioners of the Orphan House keenly regretting the early fate of Mr. Bignall, beg leave to condone most sincerely with Mrs. Bignall and the rest of the family upon the mournful event, and desirous of paying the last tribute of respect to the memory of a man they so highly esteemed, have unanimously resolved to attend his funeral and to carry in the procession all the children now upon the establishment. These children will long carry in

their minds a grateful remembrance of the services they have received at the hands of their departed and much lamented friend, and benefactor.

I am with great respect, Sir,
Your most obedient servant,
Charles Lining, Chairman.

OPERAS — PLAYS AND PANTOMIMES

WEST AND BIGNALL'S SECOND SEASON, 1794

Jan. 22 — The Earl of Essex
The Farmer, or The World's Ups and Downs
24 — The West Indian
Flitch of Bacon
27 — The Child of Nature, (From French play Zébé)
The Padlock
29 — The Orphan
The Scheming Lieutenant
31 — Highland Reel (with original overture)
The Old Maid

Feb. 3 — Gamester or False Friend
The Son-in-Law
5 — The Merchant of Venice
Rosina
7 — The Man of the World
The Poor Soldier
8 — (Through courtesy of Messrs. West and Bignall, the Charleston Theatre was used by the French Players to present) —
Pygmalion
The Two Hunters and the Milkmaid, and
The Plebeian Become a Man of Consequence
10 — The Young Quaker
The Agreeable Surprise
The Contrast, or The American Song of Liberty
12 — Love in a Village
The King and the Miller of Mansfield
14 — She Stoops to Conquer
The Quaker, or May-Day Dower
15 — Such Things Are
The Waterman
17 — Jane Shore
Miss in her Teens
19 — School for Scandal
The Romp
21 — The Way to Keep Him
Peeping Tom of Coventry
24 — Macbeth
The Panel
26 — School for Wives
Flitch of Bacon
28 — Castle of Andalusia
The Merry Mourners

THE SULLYS—1794

March 3 — School for Wives
No Magnet like Love
5 — The Wonder
Don Juan, or the Libertine Destroyed
7 — Douglas
Don Juan
10 — Robin Hood
Don Juan
12 — Cato
Hob in the Well
14 — The Busy Body
The Farm House, or Country Lanes
17 — The Fair Penitent
The Midnight Hour
19 — Conscious Lovers
Follies of the Time
The Spoil'd Child — Benefit for Relief of American Captives in Algiers

March 20 — Gustavus Vasa
Patrick in Prussia
22 — He Would Be a Soldier
High Life Below Stairs
24 — Highland Reel
The Deuce Is in Him
26 — The Chapter of Accidents
Barnaby Brittle
28 — The School for Soldiers
The Spoil'd Child
31 — The Dramatist
Don Juan

April 2 — The Mourning Bride
The Mogul Tale
4 — Surrender of Calais
Village Lawyer
9 — The Beaux' Stratagem
Death of Capt. Cooke
11 — The Road to Ruin
Death of Capt. Cooke
21 — Romeo and Juliet
No Song No Supper
23 — Clandestine Marriage
Death of Capt. Cooke
24 — The Heiress
The Devil to Pay
25 — The Tragedy of Percy
Shakespeare's Jubilee
28 — A Bold Stroke for a Husband

May 2 — The Maid of the Mill
The Prisoner at Large
5 — Which is the Man
The Scheming Lieutenant

7 — The Suspicious Husband
Robinson Crusoe
9 — The Rivals
Robinson Crusoe
12 — The Tempest
Midnight Hour
14 — Alexander the Great
Robinson Crusoe
15 — How to Grow Rich
The Widow's Vow
19 — War of Wits
Rosina
21 — Lionel and Clarissa
Neck or Nothing — Benefit of Mr. J. Kenna
23 — A Day in Turkey
Fairy Gambols — Benefit of Miss Sully and Miss J. Sully
26 — Fashionable Lover
The True-born Irishman — Benefit Mr. Hamilton
28 — Wild Oats, or the Strolling Gentleman
The Quaker — Benefit Mr. J. West
30 — More Ways than One
The Poor Soldier — Benefit Mr. Hallam

June 2 — Tragedy — Barbarossa, or the Fall of Algiers
Prologue — Hobby Horses
Dissertation on Taxation
A Trip to Scotland, or Road to Matrimony, Benefit Mr. Edgar
4 — Provoked Husband
Vocal Eulogium on Uniform Companies of Charleston, by a Charleston Gentleman
The Rich Widow — Benefit Mr. and Mrs. Henderson
6 — The Roman Father
Burletta of Midas — Benefit Mr. and Mrs. Murray
9 — Highland Reel
Tit for Tat, or Love gets a Damper — Benefit of Mr. M. Sully
11 — The Woodman
The Romp, or Love in a City — Benefit Mrs. Doctor
16 — The Duenna
All the World's a Stage — Benefit Mrs. Bignall
18 — Castle of Andalusia
The Ghost — Benefit Mr. Sully, Sr.
20 — School for Scandal
Animal Magnetism — Benefit Orphan House
23 — Countess of Salisbury
Thomas and Sally — Benefit Mrs. Edgar
25 — The Woodman
Don Juan — Benefit Mr. Chambers
27 — He would Be a Soldier
The Ghost — Benefit Mr. Clifford
30 — All for Love
Cymon and Sylvia — Benefit Mrs. West

CHAPTER X

THE FRENCH THEATRE, 1794

Grand Military and Patriotic Pantomime, "The 28th of June, or Attack on Fort Moultrie"—by Mons. Placide, with original poetic Ode by Mrs. Marriott, and Special local Scenery painted by Mons. Audin.

Grand Military and Patriotic Pantomime, "American Independence, or July 4, 1776"—by Messieurs Placide and Val, with Allegorical Prologue by Mrs. Marriott.

Ode on the Glorious French Revolution by Mrs. Marriott.

Début of young Thomas Sully in "Feats of Agility," with his father and brothers.

CHAPTER X

It was from the battlements of Fort Charles that first waved the flag of France in North America, when Jean Ribault, in 1562, landed on the shores of Carolina in Port Royal harbor and took possession in the name of Charles IX and his country; but success did not attend him, and more than a hundred years were to roll by before the Huguenots came in sufficiently large numbers to add the indelible impress of French influence to the manners and customs of Carolina.

One of the earliest churches in this province was the French Protestant, known as the Huguenot Church, which was erected some time between 1687 and 1693. "The lot on which the present (the fourth) church building stands, at the corner of Church and Queen streets, is doubtless the oldest continuous title in occupancy and ownership in the city, and the present church on the original site is now the only Huguenot Church in America.

The Huguenot Society of South Carolina numbers almost two thousand members and is the largest Huguenot Society in the World. It celebrated recently with imposing official and social functions, the four hundredth anniversary of the birth of Admiral Gaspard de Coligny, the first Martyr in the Massacre of St. Bartholomew.

As early as 1784, Charlestonians desired to have a French publication in their city, and in the *Gazette* of the State of South Carolina of August 2, appeared this:

"PROPOSALS FOR A FRENCH GAZETTE."

"It would be rather extraordinary if the 13 U. S. of America could not furnish matter and support enough for one French *Gazette.*

"We flatter ourselves that the beauty of the paper and type, the exactness of the corrections, etc., will convince the public that nothing shall be wanting to render this work worthy of their notice.

"Boinod and Gaillard: Subscriptions taken in at the Printing office."

July 1, 1793, the City *Gazette* sent out this appeal:

To the Benevolent Citizens of South Carolina, —

The capital of St. Domingo has lately been laid in ashes, its inhabitants have mingled their blood with the flames, and the fury of faction has spared alone from its resentment, those to whom the constitution permitted to escape — The remains of a people whose proneness, till of late, whose capability to confer acts of beneficence can only be equaled by the present occasion to receive them, now seek your shores in supplication for relief. Oh! Americans, you who are reposing in the lap of fortune be not unmindful of those whom she has banished from her presence. Receive them with transport and restore them to her favor.

This frightful massacre which almost depopulated one of the gems of the Antilles sent many distressed French people to Charleston where they were generously received and cared for, being taken directly into the homes of many citizens. A subscription list was immediately taken up for their benefit which realized twelve thousand five hundred dollars.

The kindness and hospitality of the Carolinians were rewarded with the deepest gratitude of the French, and their charming personalities and many accomplishments made their presence most acceptable. Says McCrady's History: "They were soon taking an active part in the City's life, and many of them being ac-

complished, became teachers of the Arts and Sciences, and gave lessons in music, painting and the languages, and immediately some of the men took places in the Orchestras of the two theatres."

Among the refugees came a Mr. Thomas, one of the musicians, with his little daughter Cornelia. Cornelia, about eight years old, was said to have had such winning ways and lovely manners that she smiled herself into the heart of General Macpherson's daughter, of whom she became the protégée and by whom she was fostered tenderly, and when she developed a talent for music her patroness had her taught by the best instructors in the City. Her father suddenly withdrew her from the society of her wealthy friends, fearing, it was said, that she might become a Protestant, and soon took her North. In course of time she married Burke, the Comedian, and after his death she married Joseph Jefferson, the English actor, and became the mother of Joseph Jefferson of "Rip Van Winkle" fame, whom all America delighted to honor.

The French refugees filled many posts of honor in Charleston's educational system, and Mme. Talvande's French Academy for Demoiselles was famous throughout the South.

Among the celebrated French Dancing Masters, who all had "Long Rooms", was Pierre Tastet, whose "Long Room" was entered through Rope Lane which formed an eastern entrance to old Concert Hall, a building recessed from Church Street westwardly, "where the St. Cecilia Society used to give concerts, and where Jemmy McLean kept billiard-tables and used to entertain the Knights of the Mace and Cue."

American sympathy for France during the troublous days of the French Revolution caused many excesses of enthusiasm, and in Charleston the tri-colored cockade of France was a badge of honor which was generally worn, the Marseillaise was the popular air, the American and French colors were shown together on all public occasions, and the most distinguished citizen did not hesitate when the *bonnet rouge* was circulated round the table to don it for a moment, and then pass it to his neighbor.

Those were the days of the *grande coiffure,* and it was said that one of Charleston's little hair-dressers, Dubard, by name, who was a violent sansculotte and who had been in France at the height of the Revolution, "entertained his customers with his impressions upon viewing the guillotining of Marie Antoinette, whilst frizzing their hair and manipulating the powder-puff."

At a civic festival given by Citoyen Boutelle, a guinea was placed under each plate as a fraternal token, but, finding that this offering was unpalatable to his Charleston guests, on the next occasion he changed the favor to a play ticket, which was received with pleasure.

The Charleston *Gazettes* were filled with descriptions of French fêtes and celebrations, and the anniversary of the destruction of the Bastille was celebrated much as it might have been in France.

With the St. Domingan addition to the French population and their national fondness for amusements and the theatre, it was quite natural that a French playhouse should have been opened in this city.

Baltimore was the first place at which French opera

was given in America,[1] and there, on June 14, 1790, a French Company of Comedians presented "La Servante Maitresse," adapted from Pergolisi's "Serva Padrona." The second attempt at French opera was made in the fall of 1790 in New York, when, on October 7, the City Tavern was honored by the première of "Le Tonnellier", by Audinot Gossec. It was New Orleans, however, that, in the Théâtre St. Pierre, had the first permanent French theatre in this country, which lasted from 1791 to 1810; and Charleston had the second, in 1794.

The first performances of French actors in this city were through the courtesy of West and Bignall at the Charleston Theatre, which their company were then occupying.

Their theatrical venture met with so hearty a response that a little more than three weeks later they had matured plans to open their own play-house. On the 12th of April, 1794, the French Theatre, which was later called the City Theatre or Church-Street Theatre, was opened in a brick building on the west side of Church Street between St. Michael's Alley and Tradd Street. The Mesne-Conveyance files give the site as: No. 40 Church — 50 x 6 x 245 ft. On south, Thos. Smith, Esqr., west, Sam'l Prioleau and north, Rev. Mr. Robt. Smith. This building was known as Sollee's Hall, and here an excellent company of comedians, pantomimists, and rope-dancers inaugurated the French Theatre.

The leader in this enterprise was Alexandre Placide, who had landed in Charleston in 1791 as "First Rope Dancer to the King of France and his Troop," and was

[1] "Early Opera in America," O. G. Sonneck.

something of a European celebrity in his line. With him came Madame Placide, but they soon went North and made their theatrical début in New York under Mr. Hallam's management, performing on the tight rope and in a ballet called "The Two Philosophers." From New York they went to Boston during the beginning of theatrical performances in that city at the New Exhibition Room under the management of Mr. Harper of the Old American Company, and in 1794 Mr. Placide became the Manager of the French Theatre in Charleston. The Placides made their European appearance at Sadler's Wells in 1781 as accomplished tumblers and rope dancers, and "it was said at the time in London that they were likely to prove as great an acquisition as the Vestris were to the Opera House." [1]

In the City *Gazette and Daily Advertiser,* March 26, 1794, appeared this announcement under the heading

FRENCH THEATRE.

The French actors propose to open their Theatre in the course of next week, and being desirous that their first performance may be an act of public utility, they mean to give it for the benefit of their unfortunate brethren, the American prisoners in Algiers.

The musicians which will compose the orchestra of their theatre, animated with the same sentiments with which the actors are penetrated, offer their services without any wish of payment for the representation, being always ready to assist their brothers, whenever occasion shall unfortunately make it necessary. They will anounce in a few days the day fixed for their début as well as the piece that will be performed; after which they will play regularly three times a week. Their performances will consist of dancing, pantomime — ballets and fancy dances; Harlequin-pantomimes, rope-dancing with many feats and little amusing French pieces; and to satisfy many who wish it, the grand pieces of the French theatre. Being willing to offer to those who are learning the French language a sure way of perfecting themselves, the theatre being a place where the French language is spoke in its purity, they propose to the admirers of the French language a fourth representation weekly by subscription, to be composed of tragedies, dramas and the first comic pieces.

[1] "History of the American Theatre" — G. O. Seilhamer.

The price of the subscription for four representations will be four dollars for the boxes and three dollars for the pit and the gallery. The subscription plays will begin when there are 200 subscribers.

This announcement appears also in French, as well as an advertisement of "une Comédie Francaise de M. Mercier ayant pour titre 'L'Habitant de la Guadaloupe'."

"Pygmalion," which jumped into immediate popularity when first given in Europe, was chosen for the initial performance by the French comedians, and the City *Gazette and Daily Advertiser* contained the first published bill of the French Theatre:

SATURDAY EVENING, APRIL 12 1794:

The Theatre will be opened for the benefit of the American Prisoners in Algiers.

1ST — PYGMALION

Scene lyric of the celebrated John James Rousseau with the Interludes in music by the same author. Mr. Dainville will perform the part of *Pygmalion* and Mrs. Val, that of *Galatea.*

2ND — DANCING ON THE TIGHT ROPE,

by Signor Spinacuta and Mr. Placide.

To conclude with a Grand Ballet-Pantomime intermixed with dances and allemandes, called "The Three Philosophers, or The Dutch Coffee House," in which Mr. Dainville will perform the part of *Mr. Vandervek,* Mrs. Val that of *Mrs. Vandervek,* and Mr. Francisquy that of the *Lover.* Doors to be opened at six o'clock and the performance to commence at seven o'clock.

Under this notice appeared an assurance of safety for the public in using this building which had been made suitable for theatrical performances, signed by Daniel Cannon, Thomas Boone and Francis Bonneau.

"The History of the American Theatre" by G. O. Seilhamer says, on page 281: "At this time there were two theatres in Charleston, the 'Charleston Theatre' built by Bignall and West in 1792, and the 'City or Church St. Theatre,' which is generally identified with

'Harmony Hall,' built for Godwin in 1786. In the summer of 1794 the latter was occupied by the Placide troupe. It was then called the 'French Theatre'."

The French Theatre was never in any way identified with Harmony Hall, which was outside the city limits to the north, while the French Theatre was in the southern portion of the city near the Battery, its limit.

The first regular performance in the new play-house was given on April 12, the benefit for the American Prisoners in Algiers having appeared two days in advance of the first date advertized, on Thursday, April 10. The regular notice follows:

BY AUTHORITY
French Theatre
This Evening, April 12, 1794
Will be Performed
Dancing on the Tight Rope
By Signor Spinacuta and M. Placide
To be followed by a Comedy Proverb called
"One Does as One Can and Not as One Would."

In which Mr. Dainville will act eight different parts and Mr. Val that of *Lisimon.* Concluded by a Grand Ballet-Pantomime called

"The Bird Catcher"

In which Madame Placide will make her first appearance in the character of *Rosetta* and Madam Val, that of *Jeannette.* Lucas Segoud, the Bird Catcher, Monsieur Francisquy. The Ballet will be finished by a grand dance called "A Pas de Quatres," etc.

Passion Week has been strictly observed in Charleston since the beginning of its history, so both the Charleston and French Theatres closed their doors for a week and gave advance notices of unusual attractions for Easter week, the latter offering a comedy called "Harlequin Robbed" and the grand historic pantomime in two parts, of "Robinson Crusoe," with songs and dances.

The French Theatre had hardly been established be-

fore dissatisfied performers at "the Charleston" were knocking at its doors; the first to be admitted being Mr. Clifford, "a versatile genius, singer, composer and poet," who acted the Captain of the ship in "Robinson Crusoe," singing the "Heaving of the Lead."

Part 2d was composed of a grand entertainment given to Robinson Crusoe, with dances and songs, in which "Master Duport, 13 years of age, made his first appearance in the Grande Folie D'Espagne," the whole concluded with the "Minuet de la Cour by M. et Mme. Placide."—

"The scenery painted by Mons. Audin." "Nothing has been omitted on the part of the actors to render the scenery and dress of the pantomime very complete so as to give satisfaction to the public."

Mr. Dainville, the leading man for the French actors, must have been one of the pioneer "Lightning-Change Artists," as in the second Easter week attraction, the comedy of disguises called, "The Counsellor-at-Law Songster, or He is Wrong to Account Without his Landlord," he impersonates seven different characters, and at the first performance he impersonated eight.

Spinacuta and Placide performed wonders on the tight rope; Mr. Clifford had lively songs, and then came the feature of the evening, the grand Ballet-Pantomime "The Rose and the Bud," and a *Divertissement* ending with a Pas de Deux by M. Francisquy and Mme. Placide and one by Master Duport, 13, and Mlle. Duthé, 10, years of age.

The theatre announcements that followed were given in both French and English, and in many of the English lines one can feel the strenuous struggle that the

programme committee was having to set forth a correct and elegant bill.

One or two of the French bills follow:

Par authorité
Le Théâtre Francais
D'ouvera Aujourd'hui, Samedi, Avril 26,
Les Déguisements Amoureux, ou
La Résolution Inutile.
La Danse de Corde avec plusieurs tours nouveaux; Suivi de la pantomime
De Robinson Crusoe
Terminé par un grand Feu d'Artifice.
On a établie à la Salle un Bureau exprès pour MM. les Francais, etc
Loges pr. et second rang, une gourde,
Parterre, trois gourdins:
Galleries, deux gourdins.

The May-Day bill was "Le Père Duchèsne, ou La Mauvaise Habitude," en deux actes — L'Anglaise par M. Francisquy. La Danse de Corde par Messieurs Spinacuta et Placide, et Mademoiselle Cortes, pour son début. Une Chanson par Mr. Clifford, et une Danse de Caractère par M. Duport. Le tout fera terminé par "Arlequin Gentilhomme Supposé, Pantomime."

Harlequinades were the joy of our ancestors for a full century, in which time they blossomed in every conceivable form. The French literally gloried in the exuberant play of life in Arlequin's antics, contortions, and drolleries.

In the beginning the costume of Arlequin was à la Watteau with the loose trousers and huge ruff, but a Drury Lane Ballet-Master changed it to a tight-fitting suit of white worked over with parti-colored diamonds and the whole costume sprinkled thickly with spangles. No wonder that everybody prepared to be happy when this dazzling spectacle bounded upon the stage with fascinating pirouettes and merry tricks and astounding feats of agility.

The light, gay, fantastic offerings at the French theatre, full of color, motion, and good music, were making a great appeal to the people, who, in witnessing them, relaxed the tension under which their lives were straining with the many perplexing problems that were confronting them. Troubles with Great Britain who had impressed American seamen, depreciation of their paper medium, troubles in the upper portion of the state with Indians, and with Spaniards in Florida, and a large number of families, homeless refugees from St. Domingo, to care for.

Persiflage, hearty laughter, and nothing to cause serious thoughts, was what they wanted and were getting in their hours of recreation at the French theatre, and its popularity grew apace, and it became a formidable rival to the American play-house. The ingenuity of the French was boundless to keep their seats filled, and they worked on the principle that "Variety alone gives joy." "The Old Soldier," played on May 8, called forth a request from the management that all citizens in the audience would join with them in singing the "Marseillaise Hymn." This brought forth tremendous enthusiasm, "everybody was French that night, and all the small boys beat tattoos in time," said one of the accounts of it.

After the presentation of "Le Baron de Trenck, Comédie Héroique," the reinstating the Baron in his military capacity of Captain of the Guards introduced marches, counter-marches, manoeuvres, etc., usual on a military festival. The bill of the day announced that these would be executed "par les citoyens de cette ville" — all the boys belonging to the military companies,

no doubt, attracting each his own special girl to see him on the stage.

In 1794 there was wild excitement over the control of the air through ballooning and many extravagant theories were afloat, but nothing was dreamed of that could even approach in wildest imagination what this day and generation is witnessing in the harnessing of wind and air currents to man's will.

The *Gazette* of the day with flaming headlines *Sic Iter Ad Astra* over the picture of a balloon, announced to Charleston's inhabitants the arrival of Mr. Blanchard, citizen of the French Republic, and member of many academies in Europe, who would for their edification make his forty-seventh ascension!

The alert managers of the French Theatre, always with a keen eye on the amusement weather-vane, brought forward at the same time, "Harlequin-Balloonist, or Pierrot in the Clouds." Apropos of the subject, appeared a droll little skit in an issue of the South Carolina *Gazette* of 1784:

"Poets are the only living creatures, the chameleon excepted, that have any interest, that is *real property,* in air. It is well known that they have built in that element. Ariosto obtained from Apollo the fee simple of all that tract of territory which lies between Italy and the Moon. Milton, fired with a genius more than mortal, shot up into Heaven of Heavens, whilst Shakspeare on the wings of Inspiration, his head crowned with lightning and his hand armed with thunder, subdued and peopled a vast aerial continent with beings of his own wonderful creation. There is no security now against the bold Aeronaut."

By the middle of May it was no longer necessary for M. Douvillier to personate half a dozen characters. The season of Benefits was at hand, recruits had steadily come in from various places, and they advanced from fifteen members to twenty-two by the end of the month, including Mr. and Mrs. Marriott and five of the Sully family, who had come over from the Charleston Theatre.

The cast now included:

M. and Mme. Placide	Mlle. Duthé
M. and Mme. Douvillier	Mlle. Cortes
M. and Mme. Val	M. Latté
M. Dainville	Mr. and Mrs. Marriott
M. Francisquy	Mr. M. Sully [père]
Mr. Clifford	Mr. M. Sully, Jr.
Master Duport	Mr. Sully [Chester]
Signor Cortez	Master Sully [Thomas]
M. Founiaud	Miss J. Sully [Julia]

The other members of the Sully family remained at the Charleston Theatre.

On May 19 a card from Mr. and Mrs. Marriott stated that, on account of a recent disagreement at the English Theatre, they had accepted an offer from Mr. Placide to have their benefit at the French Theatre, and on May 23d appeared this obsequious appeal:

Mr. and Mrs. Marriott powerfully impressed with a conscious sense of the respect and duty they owe to the Public, and not less grateful for the flattering and honorable reception they have experienced from the ladies and gentlemen of Charleston in their professional capacity during the few nights of their exhibition, humbly conceive the offer of their names this evening for their patronage, will not be thought an intrusion, and as the ungenerous treatment of Mr. West compelled them to quit their situation, they are under the necessity of taking a night at the French Theatre, kindly offered them by Mr. Placide; and should they now prove successful candidates for the public favour, it will not relax their arduous endeavours to merit the warm support and protection of so judicious and liberal an audience.

At their Benefit, the first of the season, Mrs. Marriott recited an original "Ode to Liberty," and Mr. Marriott

recited his wife's "Ode on the Glorious French Revolution," between the comedy "Amorous Disguises" and "The Old Soldier," and "Foibles and Fashions of the Times." There were songs and dissertations, winding up with "Manual Exercises in the character of an American Officer" by Mrs. Marriott. Mr. Clifford availed himself of the present opportunity to return his most sincere thanks for past favours, etc., and announced that after his Benefit, "and with unfeigned thanks to those gentlemen who had honored him with their support as pupils in the Art of Fencing, he would open a Public School for teaching that polite art of defence."

"La Belle Dorothée," heroic pantomime in four acts, with new decorations, was given a full synopsis in the *Gazette,* including the Auto da Fé. Many new comedies, farces, and pantomimes were now given, and the Marriotts, "by request," were much in evidence as recitationists.

On June 7 the "Military Citizens of the City" executed Military Evolutions — and in the South-American play of "Mirza and Lindor," in the Concert scene, two of Charleston's musicians, Messrs. Petit and Foucard, were brought in to render the solos, and Mme. Placide sang the French song "Malbrough," accompanied by Master Dupont on the violin.

An elaborate description is given of the stage setting for every act in "Mirza and Lindor," with the remark: "The stage alters without dropping of the curtain." "A delightful Garden in which there is a superb gallery prepared for the entertainment which *Lindor* gives to the Governors," is for Act Third. Could M. Audin,

Charleston's Scene-painter and Shifter, have been the pioneer in the lowering of lights for the shifting of scenery to gay music?

The Frenchmen were good advertizers, and a full explanation of every situation — and full description of scenery, any unusual costumes or *divertissement* of any sort in their programmes—was minutely recorded, so every one knew exactly what to expect at each performance. This information usually took up three-quarters of a column.

On June 12 a particularly attractive programme was offered, when, for the "first time in this city, Mons. Douvillier, actor from the French Theatre in Paris, will appear in the character of Figaro in a comedy from the Grand French Theatre, in four acts, called 'Le Barbier de Seville.'" M. et Mme. Douvillier made their first American appearance in Newport in 1793.

"Orpheus and Eurydice," with music and original overture by the celebrated Paisiello, preceded, on June 24, the "Indian Heroine," given here for the first time. "Orpheus and Eurydice," composed by John Rich of Covent Garden, had, as one of its principal hits, a mechanical serpent and dragon which, in squirming about the stage, gave a particularly goose-flesh thrill to the juveniles in the audience.

The 28th of June, on which day was fought the Battle of Ft. Moultrie in 1776, being one of South Carolina's patriotic holidays, was utilized by the French players and the Marriotts, who together celebrated the occasion with a patriotic Ode called "Attack on Ft. Moultrie," written by Mrs. Marriott and spoken by Mr. Marriott in the character of *Sergeant Jasper,* who res-

cued the flag when it had been shot from the ramparts, and holding it aloft, cried: "Let us not fight without a flag!" Mrs. Marriott's patriotic effusions seem to have been very popular, and she brought out a book while in Charleston. The French Theatre arranged for this occasion: "A Grand Military and Patriotic Pantomime in Two Acts (never performed here) called 'The 28th of June, or The Attack on Ft. Moultrie,' with new scenery, decorations and dresses. The View of the Exchange, the Council Chamber and the Wharves of Charleston, by Monsieur Audin. A Grand Sea-Fight where the Enemy's squadron is defeated and a Funeral Procession to bury a brave Sergeant who died in the defence of his country."

The anticipated commemoration of the victory of the Americans over Sir Peter Parker's fleet on the twenty-eighth June, was all spoiled by the "wetness of the weather," and on account of the "Splendid Fire Works prepared by Mr. Spinacuta" for that occasion, it was postponed till July 1.

"On the anniversary of American Independence," says *The Columbian Herald,* "a salute was fired at the dawn of day" —

"At six o'clock in the morning the uniformed companies belonging to the Eastern and Western regiments of militia of this city under the command of Lieutenant Colonels Read and Lee, paraded in Meeting Street and marched thence to South Bay where they fired a *feu de joie* and gave three cheers in honor of the day which gave liberty and independence to America. Nearly 600 men were under arms, (though some of the companies did not assemble more than half their men) and ex-

hibited a very handsome military appearance. The Charleston Battalion of Artillery consisting of upwards of 200 men under the command of Major Rutledge, also paraded and fired a federal salute."

The French players decided to run a summer season, so they kept their doors open till the end of August. This decision brought to the French Theatre the rest of the Sully family and other actors from the Charleston after its close. The neck and neck race which the two theatres had run up to the close of the Charleston, kept all the player-folk up to white heat, and much bad feeling was engendered when members of the Charleston's troupe went over to the French. A modest little voice from the past speaks up and undoubtedly points the source of many of the musical supplies of the vocalists of the two theatres whose introduction of songs between the plays was a regular part of their profession.

"Mr. De Colland hath the honor to present his respects to the ladies and gentlemen of this city, and acquaints them that he sells music-paper of all sizes. He likewise copies music in the neatest manner. He hath to dispose of Airs selected from the most celebrated French operas, and adapted for any instrument. He resides in Meeting Street in the Court opposite the Scotch Meeting."

The little old houses in the Court are still standing, and one can picture a group of young people around his door, only a few at a time being able to stand inside — the young men in tight-waisted coats with rather full skirts, and choker ties, and the young girls, (some of the Sullys no doubt among them) in short-waisted

white muslin dresses, Leghorn hats wound about with blue, black velvet or cherry-colored ribbons, and dainty sandals laced with ribbons across their white stockings.

Both of the theatres had been running three times a week on alternate days, but Easter-week and Race-week, they ran every day. On July 12 "The Two Hunters and The Milk Maid" and "The Old Soldier" were requested by certain of their patrons, and these "Together with the exertions of Master C. [Chester] Sully, T. Sully, [Thomas the youngest son, later to become the celebrated painter] and Mr. M. [Matthew, Jr.] Sully, being their first appearance on this stage; whose mixed exertions will afford an entertainment highly pleasing." "A comic song called 'Nothing Like Grog' by Mr. Sully" [pére].

On July 14 the Benefit of Master Duport took place, and on the 16th for M. Douvillier's Benefit a new pantomime and a new opera made their first appearance here, "Annette and Lubin" and "La Chercheuse d'Esprit, or The Girl who looks for Sense," and the charming Misses Sully made their first bow on the French stage and delighted the audience with a Country Dance.

Mrs. Val's Benefit included the "Reception of a Knight in the fashion of ancient times with all the pomp that then existed; heraldic, scenic, comic and poetic." The novelty shown at Mrs. Placide's Benefit was a new English Interlude called the "Fusilier, or the Clown outwitted" — and in a note: "Mme. Placide begs leave to assure the ladies and gentlemen that the yard leading to the theatre is rendered commodious for the reception of carriages" — etc.

Something new or strange, something to add an un-

familiar zest, was always brought forth to allure the public by each Benefit recipient, and Mr. Sully marshaled to his assistance five members of his family, who took part in the comic Opera, musical Interlude, or the new Pantomime, "The Spirit of Fancy." Tight-rope dancing and songs were introduced, and he himself, as a glorious Harlequin, "made a surprizing leap on to the stage, surrounded with a ring of fireworks." Mrs. Sully, appearing for the first time, gave several musical selections on the piano-forte during the musical Interlude.

Mr. Val's belated patriotic show was not given till July 30, but the Pantomime in 3 Acts, called "American Independence, or the 4th July, 1776," lost none of its zest for the audience. It was preceded by an allegorical Prologue, a portion of the description of which is taken from the bills of the day:

America, represented by a woman dressed as an Indian, her face covered with a black veil as a token of mourning and grief, and her hands in chains; Mrs. Placide.

England, represented as a woman in a grand Court dress, holding in one hand a standard, bearing the armorial of Great Britain, and in the other hand a naked sword; Mrs. Val.

The Parliament of England, represented as a man dressed in black, holding the arbitrary act which occasioned the separation of America from Great Britain; Mr. Dainville.

Liberty with its Attributes, represented as a woman dressed in white; Mrs. Douvillier.

Satellites of Despotism, represented as two lictors carrying arms; Messrs. Spinacuta and Latté.

President of the Council, Mr. Val.

Declaration of Independence, the statue of Despotism broken in pieces and that of Liberty erected in its stead! etc.

A Grand Feast to Liberty, etc., etc.

M. Placide, who was an indefatigable worker with a very nimble wit, was without doubt the author of this pantomime as of many others, and he and M. Audin,

Scene-Painter and Decorator, had probably spent many weeks preparing for this spectacle.

August 1 in the City *Gazette and Daily Advertiser*, appears this notice:

THEATRE.

Agreeable to a plan left with the Printers hereof, the inhabitants of Charleston and its vicinity will have an opportunity of enjoying the elegant rational amusements of the theatre on cheaper and more convenient terms than were ever offered on this continent. The plan is to divide the scheme into 458 shares (which by accurate calculation the boxes of the Theatre in Church street will with ease contain) 208 of which shares are to be subscribed for by ladies and 250 by gentlemen; the first at the very low sum of 9 pounds, 1s, and the last 12 pounds, 1s, besides 1 pound, 1s entrance for both sexes, which will carry them to the plays the whole year through; and at three plays a week in winter and but two plays a week in summer, will be only 1s. 6d. each representation to the ladies and 2s. each to the gentlemen, for 125 representations in the year; and as the shares can be transferred or lent, it will be a great accommodation to such as may reside part of the year in the country.

N. B. The plays will be performed altogether by English actors (part of which are already engaged) and the pantomimes, etc., by French; and the public may rest assured that no expense will be spared in procuring the best performers.

For further particulars apply at this printing office, where the subscription list is left.

This *abonnement* system, as used in France to give a reduced price by subscription for theatrical or other purposes, was here for the first time suggested in America.

Mr. Placide was a skilful and adroit Manager whose quick wit enabled him to turn to account everything presenting itself. He not only offered inducements to musicians from the "English" orchestra, but took in all of West and Bignall's malcontents, used the local militia with telling effect, and was offered for presentation the local patriotic Pantomime "The 28th of June, 1776, or the Attack on Fort Moultrie," which had a great vogue. He introduced a number of new operas and pantomimes, brought out several young actors

and actresses, and employed continually the scene-painter Audin during this engagement, so it is rather astonishing to note his complete change of heart with the beginning of the fall season and his unconditional surrender to the erstwhile enemy.

The following notice appeared September 20, and, as it was the last performance of the French Players, as such, will be given in full:

BY AUTHORITY
CHARLESTON THEATRE.

The French players, being engaged for the ensuing season by Messrs West and Bignall, and Mr. West having granted them the use of his theatre for one night's performance for their benefit before the opening of the same, they propose performing

This Evening the 20th inst.

A Lyric Drama (with its original overture), called
"Pryame and Thisbé."
Characters:

Pyrame, ...Mr. Dainville
Thisbé, ...Mrs. Douvillier

A Grand Pantomime Battle, called
"The Rural Waggish Tricks, or
The Broken Milk Pot."

Wood Cutters, ...Mr. Val and Mr. Dainville
Lucas, bagpipe player, ...Mr. Douvillier
Colas, a shepherd, ...Mr. Francisqui
A Country Inn Keeper, ...Mr. Latté
Colette the Milk Maid, ...Mrs. Val
Shepherdesses, ...Mrs. Douvillier and Miss Duthé

A much-admired Arietta of the celebrated opera called "Melomomanie," to be sung by Mrs. Douvillier

To which will be added,

A Comedy with several Disguises, called "The Feigned Consultations,"

Eight different characters by Mr. Dainville
Attorney or Barrister, Mr. Val

The whole to conclude with An Heroic Comic Pantomime called
"The Death of Malbrook."

Duke of Malbrook, ...Mr. Dainville
Officers, ...Messrs. Val, Latté, etc.
Page, ...Mr. Douvillier
John, servant of Malbrook, ...Mr. Francisqui
Tommy, son of the Duke of Malbrook, ...A Young Master
Duchess of Malbrook, ...Mrs. Douvillier
Betsy, her Maid, ...Mrs. Val
Soldiers.

Boxes 5/10 Pit 5s. 3/6.

To the magnanimity of Messrs. West and Bignall the salutatory and valedictory of the French players were given at the Charleston Theatre, and the patience and courtesy, under serious provocation, of the English Managers won out in the end, and the French Company capitulated and joined their ranks.

The French Theatre which was ever afterward called the City or Church-Street Theatre, was opened in October for its second season under the management of Mr. Edgar, a former member of West and Bignall's company.

FRENCH THEATRE

1794

Repertoire season of 1794.

Opened Sat.		Pygmalion Dancing on Tight Rope	Benefit of American Prisoners in Algiers.
Apr.	10 —	The Three Philosophers or the Dutch Coffee House	
	12 —	One Does as One Can and Not as One Would The Bird Catchers	
Easter Mon.		Harlequin Robbed Tight Rope Dancing	
	21 —	Robinson Crusoe Minuet de la Cour	
	25 —	Comedy of Disguises The Counsellor-at-Law, Songster The Rose and the Bud	
	26 —	Amorous Disguises Useless Resolution Robinson Crusoe Dancing and Stage Fire Works	
	29 —	Intendant Comedian The Bird Catchers Harlequin Doctor	
May	1 —	Père Duchèsne Harlequin Supposed Nobleman	
	3 —	Father Duchèsne The Rose and the Bud	
	6 —	The Reasonable Fool or the Englishman The Milliner	
	8 —	The Plebeian raised to Fortune The Old Soldier	
	10 —	Baron Trenck or the Prussian Soldier	

		Harlequin Supposed Nobleman	
	13 —	Harlequin Robbed Harlequin Doctor	
	15 —	The Young Indian The Wood Cutters or the Militia Man	
	17 —	Opera — The Two Hunters and the Milk Maid The Milliner	
	20 —	Comedy — Parisian gone into the Country The Three Philosophers	Benefit Signor Cortez
	22 —	The Two Hunters Harlequin Balloonist	
	23 —	Amorous Disguises The Old Soldier	Benefit Mr. and Mrs. Marriott
	24 —	The Reasonable Fool Harlequin Balloonist	
	27 —	The Waters of Oblivion La Belle Dorothée	
	29 —	Beverley or the English Player The Wood Cutters	
	31 —	Aesop at the Faire La Belle Dorothée	
June	5 —	Harlequin Balloonist Boniface Pointu and his Family	
	7 —	Young Indian Woman Mirza and Lindor	Especially elaborate scenery prepared for this by M. Audin
	10 —	Baron Trenck The Way of the World The Rose and the Bud	
	12 —	The Barber of Seville Mirza and Lindor	
	14 —	The Deserter The Two Game Keepers	
	17 —	The Speaking Picture The Dog Magician	
	19 —	The Pessimist The Grand Italian Shades	
	21 —	Father Duchèsne The Milliner The Dog Magician	
	24 —	Orpheus and Eurydice	
	26 —	Eugenia The Italian Shades The Besieged Castle	
	28 —	Jeanette 28th of June, 1771, or the Attack on Ft. Moultrie	The production of Mr. and Mrs. Marriott, Mr. Placide and Mr. Audin.

July	1	(Postponed Bill The 28th of June)	
	2	The Speaking Picture	
		28th of June, repeated	
	4	Attack on Ft. Moultrie	
		"A new Play" — (name not given.)	
	9	The Deserter	
		Mirza and Lindor	
	11	The Two Harlequins	Benefit
		Belle Dorothée	Mr. Val
	12	The Two Hunters	
		The Old Soldier	
	14	The Two Hunters	Benefit
		Harlequin Balloonist	Master Duport
	16	Annette and Lubin	Benefit
		The Seeker after Sense	Mr. Douvillier
	18	Pygmalion	
		Robinson Crusoe	
	21	Fusilier or the Clown Outwitted	Benefit
		The Village Soothsayer	Mrs. Placide
		The Indian Heroine	
	23	Nina or the Distracted Lover	Benefit
		Blaise and Babet	Mr. Francisquy
	25	The Milliner	Benefit
		Linco's Travels	Mr. Sully
		Harlequin Statue	
	28	The Deserter	
		Blaise and Babet	
	30	Nina	
		American Independence or	
		the 4th of July	
Aug.	1	Orpheus and Eurydice	
		The Old Soldier	
	4	Annette and Lubin	Benefit
		The 28th of June, 1776	Signor
			Spinacuta
	6	Harlequin Robbed	Benefit
		Zémire and Azor	Mrs. Douvillier
	8	Linco's Travels	
		The Two Woodcutters or the	
		Merry Girl	
		Zémire and Azor	
	11	The Lamenting Statue	
		Genevieve of Brabant	
	25	The Fusilier	Benefit of
		Linco's Travels	Mr. M. Sully, Jr.
		The Dressing Room	

The Proprietor of the French Theatre was John Joseph Leger Sollee, and the Manager, Alexander Placide.

CHAPTER XI

The Charleston Theatre and the Church-Street Theatre 1794-5.

Local Offerings for the Season.

Elaborate Production of Jupiter and Europa. Arranged by Mr. Placide and Mr. Audin, Scene-Painter.

The Cooper or the Amorous Guardian, Pantomime, by Mr. Francesqui (of the Charleston Theatre.)

Naval Engagement between the Brutus and the Alfred and Sir Charles Grey Off Charleston Harbour, By a Resident of this City.

America Preserved, or the Americans and French at the Siege of Yorktown, By Rev. J. P. Coste, French Protestant Minister.

Comedy in 2 Acts interspersed with Songs, the Elopement or a Trip to the Charleston Races, By a Gentleman of this City.

Occasional Address written by a Charleston Gentleman, and spoken by Mrs. West at the Annual Benefit for the Orphans.

Farce — The Embarrassment of Error, or the Generous Tar, Written by a Gentleman of Charleston.

The French Players' Summer Season at the Charleston Theatre, 1795.

CHAPTER XI

The two theatres in Charleston from the fall of 1794 till the close of the season of 1795 were so inextricably bound together as to personnel and performances that they can be considered only as complementary each to the other, and their history is virtually given in the Theatre-bills for the day and the open discussions in the *Gazettes,* through "Friend of the Church-Street Theatre," "Friend of Justice," et al.

The handsome Charleston Theatre of the Doric order, with thirteen outlets for greater safety, and the late French Theatre, renamed the City, or Church-Street Theatre, were both bidding for patronage. The French forces had gone over to the Charleston under West and Bignall, and Mr. Edgar, formerly of that theatre, was the new Manager of the Church-Street house. A number of actors and actresses from London and Edinburgh made their débuts in Charleston during this period, who have by various theatrical writers been assigned to New York or Philadelphia. The fall season began with the following announcement:

CITY GAZETTE AND DAILY ADVERTISER.
Monday, Oct. 6th., 1794.
Charleston Theatre.

Mr. West and Mrs. Bignall respectfully inform the ladies and gentlemen of Charleston that the Theatre will open this evening, the 6th. inst., with the Comedy of "The Foundling," written by the author of the tragedy, "The Gamester."

The cast showed only one new name among the English players, that of Mr. Francis, who played the part of *Justice Benbow* in the "Flitch of Bacon," which followed the comedy.

After the death of her husband, Mrs. Bignall was as-

sociated with Mr. West in her husband's place and continued in the partnership for a number of years.

The Charleston season of 1794-5 ran from October 6, 1794, through July 1, 1795. The stormy career of the Church-Street Theatre under the management of Mr. Edgar ran its short course from December 20, 1794, through February 23, 1795, ending with Mr. Edgar's Benefit on that evening. After nursing his wrath and indignation for a little over a month, the Prodigal returned, and the magnanimous Manager of the Charleston took him back into the fold.

A new French comedy, "Jerome Pointer" was brought forward the first week and two new performers introduced in the Pastoral-Pantomime-Ballet — Mr. Fayol (his first appearance in Charleston,) and young Miss West, the Manager's daughter, making her formal début as a shepherdess in the same.

Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays were announced as the Charleston's days, and Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays as those of the Church-Street Theatre — and the townspeople began immediately to take a share in things theatrical by expressing their opinions, favorable or adverse, upon both play-houses.

On October 18, appears the following:

"A Correspondent" who is very fond of the drama and wishes to promote the success of the company of Comedians in this town, as well as the comfort and entertainment of the audience, begs leave to offer a few hints. The Theatre (the Charleston) has been executed in a style greatly superior to what has ever come under the observation of the writer, in any town of Great Britain of five times the extent of Charleston, and it is convenient within itself in every respect but one:— the two back seats of the upper side boxes require to be raised so much higher than their present situation, as the difference between a man's height when he stands and when he sits. Every person who has sat in those boxes in a full house must have felt the inconvenience of being obliged to stand up during the performance, unless accommodated with a front seat.

Such inconveniences have without doubt, a tendency to discourage attendance.

Another evil prevails, though not in the theatre, yet under the same roof; the room provided for refreshment is so contiguous to the stage, that the conviviality of the company frequently breaks in upon the entertainments of the house; and every man of taste and feeling must be sensible, that in serious scenes, more especially, such interruptions must utterly destroy the interest, by removing the delusion.

The town of Boston has very wisely appointed a Master of the Ceremonies, with full power to settle all kinds of disturbances, and such an officer is extremely wanted in disputes which often arise about boxes and seats taken by individuals for their friends, into which foreigners, unused to our customs are apt to struggle for admittance; and the mistake of a boxkeeper who had not sufficient power to pacify the parties, might very easily, in an instance to which your correspondent was a witness, have occasioned a duel between two citizens, precious in the highest degree to their families.

Great effects come often from small causes; and lighter trifles than a playhouse wrangle, have ultimately involved two nations in a war. If the powers of the city council are competent to this business, it surely is not unworthy of their attention.

It is hoped that if the improvement recommended with respect to the seats of the theatre should be adopted, the alteration will be complete; if they should be raised even higher than may be thought necessary to a convenient prospect of the stage, the spectators will be presented to each other in a more agreeable point of view.

Two of George Colman's favorite pieces were given for the first time in Charleston, October 20 and October 24, "The English Merchant, or Generous Citizen," and the comic opera, "The Battle of Hexham." Several dramatic exponents had been added to the force taking care of the tragedies and comedies, and the French Players gave the operas, pantomimes, ballets, and *divertissements* just as they had given them at their own theatre, and West and Bignall now had a very strong company.

"Nina" was the opera sung on the 20th, in the same manner as it had been given the year before at the French Theatre. "The Battle of Hexham" was first brought to the people's notice thus: "The description of this favourite piece being taken from a remarkable occurrence of history renders it particularly interesting.

The comic characters of the play possess a quaintness and simplicity equal in many instances to the humourous clowns of the immortal Shakespeare. The affecting story of Gondibert and Adeline formed the most beautiful episode in the whole arcana of the drama, and we think it no flattery to premise that the piece wants but to be seen to be admired. Mr. and Mrs. Chambers were *Gondibert* and *Adeline.*"

Cumberland's "Brothers, or Cornish Shipwreck" was another new play to Charleston, as was "Cross Purposes, or the Rival Brothers," given on the 29th, with Mr. Chambers as *Chapeau,* Mrs. West as *Mrs. Grub,* Mr. Kenna as *Mr. Grub,* and Mr. Lewis as *Consol.*

"Isabella, or the Fatal Marriage" was always an intriguing bait for those who liked to be stirred up, and who enjoyed weeping through a performance, and they were given this opportunity on November 5th, but with a cheer-up afterward, of "Four Valiant Brothers," with new scenery, music, dresses, and decorations. The introduction in this play of a battle with shields and broadswords and bright heraldic trappings, "with the manner of attack and assault of the city by Charlemagne," was mimic warfare which delighted the audience with its ancient methods and brilliant spectacular effects.

Theatrical Note November 8: "It is with pleasure we announce to the public the arrival of Mrs. Robinson, formerly Mrs. Ryan, to join the Charleston Company of Comedians, and that she will make her début on Monday evening in the part of *Alicia* in 'Jane Shore'."

Rowe's tragedy, "Jane Shore" had been for genera-

tions a test play for actresses, and the title-character was one of the great heroines of the English stage; and when that great tragedy was first produced *Mistress Shore* was played by Mrs. Oldfield; *Hastings* by Barton Booth, and *Gloster* by Colley Cibber. *Jane* became a goal towards which all ambitious young actresses aspired, and its sympathy-gripping episodes have rolled down through the years without losing any of their human appeal. The American actress, Genevieve Ward, long resident in England, played the rôle of *Jane Shore* in the late eighties of the nineteenth century, and a picture of her in this character appeared in the Literary Digest, May 15, 1920, under the heading "The Passing of Tragedy Queens."

In this play on November 10, Mrs. West, who was a charming actress and faithful in all her parts, gave perfect satisfaction to a large and sympathetic audience.

The French members of the company had been rehearsing for some time "The 14th of July, 1789, or the Destruction of the Bastille," which great scenic production caused every member of the troupe the most poignant thrills; the bustle and stir and excitement, and the flare and glare of stage-fire became a real thing to them in this incendiary bit of history through which they had lived and rejoiced to commemorate.

Accessories and details to the minutest point, worked out by Modistes, Coutourières, Carpenters, and Scene-Painters, were listed in each of the French productions.

Mrs. Pick, a new singer, had joined the Charleston's ranks as a substitute for Mrs. Bignall, who took a month's rest. Her first part was *Cherry* in "The

Beaux' Stratagem," on November 17, and she sang all the vocal parts between the plays during a number of performances, so her voice must have been unusually pleasing.

The French actors introduced another new pantomime on November 19, "Le Brave Courier, or the Game Laws;" and one of the Shakespeare perversions of the times, "The Tamer Tamed, or A Good Wife at Last," was played the same evening.

Mrs. Pick and Mrs. Robinson, the two new members, fell easily into their places and were given the lead in a number of plays, for all actors of any ability at that time were supposed to keep themselves letter-perfect in many of the productions then on the boards and to be ready for a part any time it might be assigned, and most of them could sing a song or do a turn in "the light fantastic," if necessary, for those were the days when "work was art" and art gave joy and joy meant song.

On November 25 the first announcement of the Church-Street Theatre was made in the City *Gazette,* stating that a new play and farce would be given early next week and prices of admission reduced.

By November 26, the Charleston had added three more to its company — Mr. and Mrs. Lewis, who had parts in "The Young Quaker" and "The Irish Widow;" Mrs. Kenna, in the part of *Widow Brady* with the Epilogue-song, this being her first appearance on this stage.

A CARD FROM MR. EDGAR:

Theatre, Church Street, Nov. 28th., 1794. Mr. Edgar the new Manager of this theatre complains of a maliciously circulated report that he had solicited a return to Mr. West's Company. He publicly declares, to the disgrace of the author of this report, that

he had never dreamed of such return although having in his possession a letter soliciting it.

N. B. This theatre will open next week, the performers already engaged are, Mr. Sully, sen., Mr. M. Sully, Miss E. Sully, Mrs. Zolbins (formerly Miss J. Sully), the Master Sullys, Mr. and Mrs. Henderson, Mr. and Mrs. Edgar with two ladies and three gentlemen expected by the 13th of next month.

On November 29 an entire French performance was given at The Charleston, including "Zémire et Azor et Divertissement-Ballet."

Farquhar's comedy, "The Inconstant, or the Way to Win Him," being its première on the Charleston boards, was given on December 5. It was followed by "La Forêt Noire," as performed upward of a hundred nights at the Opera House and Theatre-Royal, Covent Garden, London; and twenty consecutive nights at the Theatre Philadelphia."

The French painter, Mr. Zolbins, and his bride (Miss Julia Sully), whose name was absent from the theatre-bills for two weeks after the marriage announcement, November 26, probably had a little wedding journey; and decided that on their return they would take the stage-name of "Belzon," for in the theatre-bills, ever after, the former Miss J. Sully was called Mrs. Belzon, or Mrs. Belzons — the bill for December 12 mentions Mrs. Belzon as playing *Trusty* in "The Provoked Husband" and announces that the new scenery and decorations for the initial performance in Charleston of "Le Déserteur Francais" were painted by Mons. Belzon.

On December 15 Mr. West and Mrs. Bignall respectfully inform their friends and the public that, in pursuance of the advice of their friends, the price of admission to the pit is reduced to 4s. and the gallery to 2s. 6d. Mr. Edgar was advertising for the opening of

the Church-Street Theatre — Lower boxes 5s., Upper boxes 3s. 6d., Pit 3s., and Gallery 1s. 9d.

Mrs. Bignall had returned to the theatre, and played the part of *Amanthis,* in "The Child of Nature," which was presented here for the first time December 17.

"Le Ballet des Provinceaux" was danced by the French members the same evening "to admiration" — the ballet always being one of its greatest enjoyments. Colley Cibber complained in his time of these "costly cordials" which made a play without a dance hardly endurable, and a recent London Letter describes the Covent Garden Royal Operas as mostly "Social Conventions that have to be bolstered up by the Russian Ballet."

City *Gazette* and Daily *Advertiser,* December 20th

By Authority.

The Theatre in Church Street will open This Evening, 20th. Inst., with Mr. Thompson's celebrated Tragedy of "Tancred and Sigismunda."

Tancred, ...Mr. Edgar
Osmond, ...Mr. Henderson
Rodolpho, ...Mr. Francis
Siffredi, ...Mr. Sully
Laura, ...Mrs. Edgar and
Sigismunda, ...Mrs. Henderson

Between the Play and Farce, a Hunting Scene by Mrs. Lawrence and a Song from the celebrated French opera called "Mélomanie" by Mr. Verguin.

To which will be added
A Farce never performed here called
"The Sultan,
Or a Peep into the Seraglio."

Solyman, ...Mr. Falkland
Osmyn, ...Mr. Henderson
Mutes, Attendants, etc.....Messrs. Francis, Edgar, Lewis, etc.
Elmira, ...Mrs. Lawrence
Ismena (with Songs), ...Mrs. Henderson, and
Roxana, an English Slave, ...Mrs. Edgar

Mrs. Lawrence, Mr. Verguin, and Mr. Falkland were new to the town, but the rest of the cast had come over

from the Charleston. As all the performances at both theatres will be listed farther on, tedium will be avoided by omitting further mention of many of them.

The ever-popular "Beggar's Opera" and the French performance of "The Devil on Two Sticks" as one of their favorite pantomimes, "Diable Boiteaux," were given at The Charleston the night after Christmas. "The Beggar's Opera" when first brought out at Covent Garden had a phenomenal run and made for its producers what was considered at that period a fortune. It introduced the long-popular song beginning:

"How happy could I be with either
Were t'other dear charmer away!"

Lavinia Fenton, the original *Polly Peachum,* captivated the Duke of Bolton in this character, who stole her from the theatre and made her his duchess.

The saving grace of this early English ballad-opera, which has been revived in both England and America in the 20th century, is, according to Maurice Hewlett, its heart-quality, which alone can keep life in anything.

Apropos of the Harlequinade:

An Harlequin pantomime is to be brought forward at the Charleston Theatre on Friday evening at the representation of which every lover of Momus will find himself highly entertained. The comic *Harlequin* of Mr. Sully has often been seen with pleasure; as yet Mrs. Placide has only been seen in serious pantomime where she has clearly evinced her abilities, but there is every reason to believe that her comic powers joined to Mr. Placide's *Clown* will be one of the greatest treats experienced in a long while.

A local item in the *Columbian Herald,* December 29:

Apropos of "The Earl of Essex," to be presented at the Church-Street Theatre — As Madam Spinacuta is to make her first appearance on any stage in America and as the bill of the day says "her first attempt in any character in the English language" as the *Countess of Rutland,* in "The Earl of Essex," an admirer of the drama cannot help applauding the judgment of the Manager as he thinks there could not be one better calculated, and should she fill it as she has done a similar one in French, she will be an ornament to the stage.

She must have lived up to this expectation as this performance was repeated two nights later "in compliance to the solicitation of many ladies and gentlemen."

On January 5 both of the theatres were giving performances with the same attraction, "The Farm House." It was a question as to how long, under this régime, the smaller company could hold out against the larger house.

Charleston now had two daily newspapers, the City *Gazette and Daily Advertiser,* and the *Columbian Herald,* and an evening paper was promised soon, "The Daily *Evening Gazette and Charleston Tea Table Companion.*"

The strained relation between the two amusement houses was visibly making itself felt, and individual friends of each theatre began their championship in the press. "Civis," who started the ball rolling, was strictly neutral and declared himself in favor of a plurality of theatres.

"A Friend of the Church-Street Theatre" took up almost two columns in the *Gazette* setting forth his views and asked:

> Could there be exhibited a more illegal and more impolitic act in a free country than the petition being circulated among the friends of West and Bignall, the prayer of the petition being that the "City Council will grant a license to but *one* theatre in Charleston"..... That the one in Church Street has as good a chance of being the one licensed as the other, and that this shallow artifice to procure signatures is easily seen through, etc. The proprietor of the Church-Street Theatre paid 100 pounds for a license,....and the license had not been granted merely through humanity to the French Actors, etc. The subscribers say further that the citizens invited Messrs. West and Bignall to build a theatre, therefore *their* theatre ought to be supported by the public..... The conduct of the subscribers in supporting Messrs. West and Bignall might be laudable if it was not known that they have their own interests in view, for as long as they keep up that theatre they have admission gratis.

Some subscribers have said that they are so determined upon supporting Messrs. W. & B. that if an exclusive privilege was refused to them, they would give ten pounds a piece to procure the best actors..... The Church-Street Theatre would never have been built if Messrs. W. & B. would have consented in time, to give to actors who have been the admiration of Europe, one half of the appointments they have received from them this year.

In the same issue of the *Gazette,* A Friend to Theatrical Merit inquires:

What, in this instance, has competition produced? If the Managers of the Charleston Theatre have in this season sunk 1500 pounds sterling in place of acquiring a decent subsistence, and the Church-Street Theatre suffered in a proportionate degree, what, it may be asked, has competition done for these men? Well-governed cities keep a restrictive eye upon increasing dissipation and are continuously watchful over theatrical pluralities:— and I will venture further to assert that no city whatever in Europe or America, composed of so few inhabitants as Charleston, has two theatres licensed..... If it should come out that the Charleston Theatre was formed and licensed under the countenance and protection of your own board (City Council) and his Excellency the Governor:— that its proprietors have laid out nearly eleven thousand pounds sterling, and have a firm reliance in your protection, have embarked their all to make it elegant and deserving a South Carolina audience, sparing no expense—even becoming prodigal and enthusiasts, to please and gratify — if their support or total ruin depends upon its rise or fall, if it is found that they have been not at a less expense than 1200 £ sterling in paying passages to performers in order to render their exhibitions as perfect and pleasing as possible:— I say, if such things are,—there can be little doubt of the side on which the scale of justice will preponderate..... Principles of humanity I hope, will ever be found in every Carolinian bosom:— on this foundation it is said, the Church-Street Theatre was erected an asylum for the unfortunate French. But let it not be forgotten that the Broad street Manager, upon the first application of the French Consul not only liberally lent their house but lighted it up at their own expense, for the benefit of those unhappy exiles, accommodating them upon similar occasions since..... If my information is just, it ought neither be forgotten that the Managers before mentioned, offered the whole of the French Company liberal salaries equal to most of their principal English performers; they then were their first protectors, etc.

Another "Friend of Theatrical Merits" reminds the citizens of the extraordinary exertions of the Managers of the Charleston Theatre to procure a reputable set of performers.

One of them, it is well known, sent his own son (young Mr. West) across the great deep to select the best actors and actresses that

could be found on t'other side of the water, and the success he met with was admirable, etc.

A Non-Subscriber, enters the ring, declaring:

The Church-Street Theatre was originally meant merely for dancing on the rope and otherwise tumbling and performing French Interludes, nor until the secession of Mr. Edgar were English players in contemplation of its projector. The License is expressly granted to Messrs. Placide and Val, to them, and them only, etc.

A "Friend to Justice," begs permission for a disinterested and impartial observer to submit his ideas on the subject:

As there exists no law against the plurality of theatres, of course the City Council cannot interfere for the suppression of either, etc. The Charleston Theatre having many advantages both as to elegance and accommodation, and if well supported will afford a much better set of performers than the other possibly can do:— these considerations make it the most proper object for our patronage..... I know but one plan that can be adopted without injury to either, which is that the proprietors and subscribers to the Charleston Theatre should indemnify Mr. Sollee, the proprietor of the one in Church street, and have it discontinued. I see no other alternative founded in equity.

A Friend to the Church-Street Theatre resents the assertion that, "that house was built only for rope-dancing which only pleases a few days while it is a novelty; it had the same rights as the other theatre and the same license was paid, etc."

A Subscriber agrees entirely with "A Friend to Justice," etc., etc., and John Sollee acknowledges at last that he is the "Friend of the Church-Street Theatre" — "and if my antagonists will be so good as to let me and my property alone, I will engage not to intrude myself in this matter again."

Mr. Edgar, who with most of his company had seceded from West and Bignall's management, evidently found the pull up-hill too strong for them, and, not having succeeded in getting the new members that he promised the public, was forced to close prematurely

the Church-Street Theatre, his benefit on February 23 being the last performance.

The benefits preceding his showed, as their main attractions, "She Stoops to Conquer," for Mrs. Edgar; "The Disbanded Officer" and "Tristram Shandy," for Mr. Francis; "Oronooko, or the Royal Slave"—a new play to Charleston — and "The Lyar, or the Oxonian in London," also presented for the first time here, were Mr. Edgar's last performances at the theatre under his management.

Mr. Edgar, although an ambitious man, was intemperate and had most disagreeable characteristics, ingratitude being one of them, and an overweening idea of his own importance. West and Bignall had been most generous in their treatment of him, and he was again taken back in their company, and was allowed a benefit at the close of the season. Mr. Edgar's final bow as Manager was made with weariness of heart and disappointment, and it may finally have been borne in upon him that it took a considerable amount of money, and many qualities which he did not possess, to be the head of a successful Theatrical business.

He had, however, to his credit the introduction of three new players, one of them an actress of merit, Madame Spinacuta; and the first presentation in America of the comedies "All in Good Humour" and "Tristram Shandy", and five plays new to Charleston.

PLAYS AT THE CHURCH-STREET THEATRE
under Mr. Edgar's Management, 1794-5

1794
Dec. 20 — Tancred and Sigismunda
The Sultan
22 — The Disbanded Officer, ...First time here
The Citizen, ...First time here

26 — Douglas
29 — Earl of Essex
St. Patrick's Day

1795

Jan. 2 — All in Good Humour, ...*First time in America*
The Farm House
The Miller of Mansfield
3 — The Earl of Essex
The Sultana
5 — All in Good Humour
The Farm House
The Miller of Mansfield
7 — Jane Shore
The Old Maid
10 — Zara, ...First time here
Polly Honey Comb
13 — All in Good Humour
Provoked Husband
Farm House
15 — Douglas
The Romp
17 — Douglas
The Deuce is in Him
20 — The Country Girl, ...First time here
All the World's a Stage
24 — She Stoops to Conquer, ...Benefit Mrs. Edgar
The Old Maid
28 — The Fair Penitent, ...Benefit Mme. Spinacuta
The Deuce is in Him
31 — The Disbanded Officer
The Virgin Unmasked

Feb. 3 — The Country Girl, ...Benefit Mr. Lewis
Thomas and Sally
5 — Tancred and Sigismunda
St. Patrick's Day
7 — The Contrast, ...Benefit Mr. & Mrs. Henderson
The Romp

Feb. 9-14 Race-Week

9 — Tancred and Sigismunda
St. Patrick's Day
10 — She Stoops to Conquer
11 — Louis XVI, or Dawn of Freedom, ...First time here
St. Patrick's Day
12 — Louis XVI
King and Miller of Mansfield
13 — George Barnwell
All the World's A Stage
14 — The Highland Reel
Harlequin Balloonist
17 — Disbanded Officer, ...*First time in America*
Tristram Shandy, ...Benefit Mr. Francis
23 — Oronooko, ...First time here
The Lyar, ...Benefit Mr. Edgar

The first performance of the new year 1795 at the Charleston brought forward a new comedy never before performed here, "Love's Frailties, or the Caledonian Painter," of which both the Prologue and Epilogue were printed in one of the Charleston papers. Another new piece was billed for January 5, "Duplicity, or A School for Gamesters." On the 21st, the pièce de résistance, a Grand Pantomime-Ballet composed by Mr. Francisqui and presented for the first time, with the original overture to the celebrated opera of "Frescatano," by the great Paisiello, called "The Unfortunate Family, or the Generous Huntsmen." A full description of all these early productions was given in the *Gazettes,* and they are most interesting, but are too voluminous for reproduction.

On January 20, the Managers informed "the ladies and gentlemen frequenting the theatre that in consequence of the Ugly Club giving a Ball there tomorrow evening the performance is postponed till January 22d."

First verse of the Song of the Ugly Club:

> Ugly mortals hither haste
> Enjoy our mirth, enjoy our feast;
> Bring rich red noses, noses crooked,
> The Shandean nose and noses hooked
> But each must bring an honest heart
> Or hear this sentence — "Hence! Depart!"

The week beginning February 9 was Race-Week and both houses played every evening to applauding audiences, and on the following Monday the Charleston continued giving, "by desire of the gentlemen of the Jockey Club," "The Beggar's Opera" and "The Spoiled Child."

It was customary to send lists of the theatres' offerings for the season, to the officers of the Jockey Club

in advance of Race-Week, and have them make the selection for that period; and it was also customary to have the Masons choose their favorites for St. John's Day.

The Benefits at the Charleston Theatre began on January 25, with an original production of local flavor.

A Comedy in two acts interspersed with songs called "The Elopement, or a Trip to the Charleston Races."

Sir Thomas Flimsey, ...Mr. Hamilton
Scipio, a Black, with a song, ...Mr. J. Kenna
Hartwell, with a song, ...Mr. J. West
Landlord, ...Mr. Sully
Postilion, ...Mr. J. Bignall
Waiter, ...Mr. Riffetts
Ralph, ...Mr. Jones
Capt. Jack, with a song, ...Mr. M. Sully
Lady Flimsey, ...Mrs. Bignall
Miss Nancy Flimsey, with a song, ...Mrs. Pick
Nelly, ...Miss Sully
Molly, ...Mrs. Doctor
Johnny, with a song, ...Mrs. Chambers (née Sully)
Country Girls, ...Mrs. Gray & Mrs. Robinson

[Johnny's song began: "Of all the gay towns in our state, Charleston is the dandy, O!"]

In the course of the comedy will be exhibited a striking view of the Charleston Race-Grounds executed in a masterly manner by Mons. Belzons.

An advance notice of this Charleston production must have kept all the members of the Jockey Club and their friends in town to give it a send-off and to enjoy the spectacle of charming Mrs. Chambers, the erstwhile lovely Charlotte Sully, in a breeches-part, with the leading song.

The first American production of "Fontainebleau" was chosen by Mrs. Bignall as her main attraction, followed by the pantomime, "Lion with the Thorn," given by the French members of the company.

Mrs. Pick who had substituted for Mrs. Bignall during her absence from Charleston, the month of November, had remained in the city playing from time to time

and becoming associated with the musical element of the community, had taken part in the St. Cecilia Concerts, had had a Musical benefit at the St. Cecilia Concert Room, and had also been accorded a Benefit by West and Bignall. For this she enlisted the services of her husband in what was then a new musical accomplishment:

Mr. Pick will perform several musical pieces on the Italian Harmonica. This instrument creates the most delightful sensations on the mind of the auditors, and being but little known in this country and the only time that Mr. Pick will perform on it here, she flatters herself it will give general satisfaction to the audience, Mr. Pick having performed on it in several capital towns of Europe with the greatest applause. After which Mr. and Mrs. Pick will sing the favorite duet of the "Way Worn Traveller" sung by them, with great applause at the St. Cecilia Society's Concerts.

Young Mr. J. West announced that the main attraction for his benefit was a musical entertainment in two acts, which had never yet been performed in America, called "The Prize, or 2. 5. 3. 8." According to their promise made to the city before the Theatre was finished, Messrs. West and Bignall gave the Annual Benefit for the Orphans on March 20, when Mrs. West delivered an Occasional Address written by a Charleston gentleman.

COLUMBIAN HERALD, MONDAY, MARCH 23, 1795.

Mr. Chambers having expressed a wish for the support of a fraternity of Ancient Masons on the occasion of his benefit, the present and past grand officers and the masters of several lodges being convened and taking into consideration the merits of that gentleman as a deserving brother and chaste actor and his superior talents in the vocal line; and having, in concert with him, selected the play for that evening's performance as abounding with universal benevolence and philanthropy, congenial with the principles of Masonry, they recommend to the officers and members of the different lodges to countenance the said brother by their general attendance on the night of this benefit.

By order of the Grand Officers,
A. Alexander, Gr. Sec.

So, "by particular request of the Officers of the

Grand Lodge of Ancient York Masons," was given the play, "Such Things Are, or the Christian Sultan," a Eulogy on Masonry, and the song, "Ye Sons of Great Science," by Mr. Chambers in the character of a Master Mason, etc.

A production worthy of much consideration to theatrical historians was the very elaborate pantomime specially adapted and arranged by Mr. Placide for his benefit, of the first American view of the heroic pantomime in two acts of "Jupiter and Europa, or the Jealousy of Juno," with new Scenery, Dresses, Decorations, Music, etc. A bill of the whole performance is given in minutest detail in the papers of the day. Space permits only the announcement:

Friday, March 27, 1795.
Mr. Placide's Benefit.

Comedy of the Foundling or Virtue Rewarded.

Between 2nd and 3rd Acts The Marseillaise Hymn in the Character of a Republican Soldier by Mrs. Placide. Between 3rd and 4th Act the Chaçonne Dance by Punchinello To which will be added for the first time in America An Heroic Pantomime in Two Acts called "Jupiter and Europa, or the Jealousy of Juno."

Juno — Mme. Placide.

Mr. Placide, zealous to give to the Public all the novelties in his power, has got up this grand Pantomime in which he has neglected nothing, either in dress or decorations or music, all of which are entirely new. He has employed for these three months past, the first artists of this city that nothing might be wanting to render it worthy of the patronage of a generous public. He flatters himself that he has succeeded in his wishes in regard not only to the excellence of the scenery, but also in the necessary quickness in changing. The ballets are under the direction of M. Francisqui; the decorations are executed by M. Audin, and the last scene of the pantomime representing Olympus in all its lustre, and the Place of the Sun, is taken from the same design as that of the Opera House in Paris, as likewise is the Bull, the Car of Juno drawn by Peacocks, and other decorations too tedious to mention, but the Public may depend that it is the most beautiful and grandest Pantomime that has ever been exhibited on the Continent of America.

The French never spared expense in the matter of

advertizing, and the press notices of this Benefit filled many columns.

After the close of the Church-Street Theatre the magnanimous Managers of The Charleston made a place for their would-be rival to return to the company, and heaped coals of fire on his head by allowing him not only one, but two benefits, to recoup his fallen fortunes at the shrine he had forsaken, and this announcement was made in the papers: "We are authorized to assure the public that Mr. Edgar has taken his old situation in the Charleston Theatre and it is said his engagement is for twelve months." "The Jew, or the Benevolent Hebrew" and "The Waterman" were given for his first benefit, and his second, "Alexander the Great," followed by "A Lively Representation of the Naval Engagement between the Brutus and the Alfred and Sir Charles Grey, Off Charleston Harbor."

This year was noted for the unusual excellence of its musical entertainments of all sorts. Charleston had almost a Symphony Orchestra at that time: two fine theatre orchestras, the highest grade musicians in the St. Cecilia Society, and a number of fine singers, and, to quote the papers, "an unequaled chorus for the operas."

Mrs. West's benefit included "Henry IV", a grand ballet "never performed here" called "The Miller and the Collier," and a new farce "written by a Gentleman of Charleston," called "The Embarrassment of Error, or Generous Tar."

The benefit of Messrs. Val and Douvillier, on May 7, brought forward another local composition, "America Preserved, or the Americans and French at the Siege

of Yorktown," inscribed to the Troops of South Carolina, and particularly to the Battalions of Charleston, by the Rev. John Paul Coste.

The evening's performances were concluded by,

A New Grand Pantomime in three acts performed for the first time on the stage of Charleston, called "Samson or the Treachery of Delilah," under the direction of Mons. Francisqui with new scenery and decorations, particularly the Temple of Dagon in embossed work and painted by Mons. Audin, and to be thrown down by Samson, etc.

The French Caste Follows:

America Preserved.

General Washington, ...Mons. Val
General Rochambeau, ...Mons. Lavalette
Duportail, ...Mons. Placide
General Lincoln, ...Mons. Dubois
Colonel Laurens, ...Mons. Douvillier
Colonel Hamilton, ...Mons. Spinacuta
General Cornwallis, ...Mons. Latté
General Clinton, ...Mons Fayol
General O'Hara, ...Mons. Francisqui
Duplessis (French officer), ...Mons. Douvillier
McDonald (British officer), ...Mons. Latté

Edward, an American Corporal,
General Abercrombie,
Two French Artillerymen,
Amateurs
American Troops,
French Troops,
British Troops,
American and French Citizens

The Scenery painted by Mons. Audin.

City *Gazette and Daily Advertiser.*

May 11th, 1795
Charleston Theatre.

The French actors having agreed with Mr. West for the use of the theatre for the summer season respectfully inform the public that it will be opened on Monday next, the 18th inst. Their performances are to consist of Operas, Pantomimes, Ballets, Comedies, etc.

Evidently Charleston was to have a continuous performance if the French players could get audiences.

The Managers of the Charleston Theatre no doubt rang down their curtain on this harassed season with a sigh of relief, but they had succeeded in bringing order

out of chaos, and their very dignified and generous attitude to their tormentors had made them hosts of new friends, and justice had finally triumphed.

Notwithstanding their harassments, this had been an artistically successful season, for they had brought out half a dozen excellent additions to their company from London or Edinburgh; had presented sixteen new plays, introducing a number of new songs; two French Pantomimes performed for the *first time in America; the first French tragedy ever performed in America,* "Mahomet, or le Fanatisme;" half a dozen theatrical pieces of more or less merit, written by Charlestonians; and employed two Scene Painters and an excellent orchestra. Mr. West was highly esteemed by the citizens of Charleston for both his artistic and gentlemanly virtues, and the members of his company were said to be not only artists but above reproach.

CHARLESTON THEATRE
SEASON 1794-5

1794
Oct. 6 — The Foundling, ...1st presentation in Charleston
The Flitch of Bacon
8 — She Stoops to Conquer
The Old Soldier
10 — The Grecian Daughter
Don Juan, or The Libertine Destroyed
11 — Jerome Pointer, ...1st Presentation here
Tableau Parlant
Whims of Galatea, ...1st Presentation here
15 — Such Things Are
The Young Indian
17 — Venice Preserved
Death of Capt. Cook
20 — The English Merchant, ...1st presentation here
Nina
22 — The West Indian
Harlequin Balloonist
24 — The Battle of Hexham, ...1st presentation here
Robinson Crusoe

Oct. 27 — The Brothers or Cornish Shipwreck,.1st presentation here
Orpheus and Eurydice
29 — Inkle and Yarico
Cross Purposes, ...1st presentation here
31 — The Recruiting Officer
Blaise and Babet

Nov. 3 — Love in a Village
The Son-in-Law
The Two Hunters
5 — Isabella, or The Fatal Marriage,..1st presentation here
The Four Valiant Brothers
7 — The Busybody
The Four Valiant Brothers
10 — Jane Shore
La Jeune Indienne
14 — The English Merchant
The 14th of July, 1789, or The Destruction of the Bastille [was postponed till the 14th, but first advertized for the 12th]
17 — The Beaux' Stratagem
Destruction of the Bastille
19 — Tamerlane The Great
Le Braconnier, or The Game Laws, 1st presentation here
21 — The Tamer Tamed
The Agreeable Surprise
The Four Valiant Brothers
24 — A Bold Stroke for a Wife
The Poor Soldier
26 — The Young Quaker
The Irish Widow, ...1st presentation here
An Entire French Performance
29 — Du Dipit Amoureux, ...Première Représentation
Zémire et Azor
Divertissement-Ballet

Dec. 1 — Percy
La Forêt Noire
3 — A Bold Stroke for a Wife
Farmer
5 — The Way to Win Him, ...1st presentation here
La Forêt Noire
8 — Lionel and Clarissa
Midnight Hour
10 — The Miser
Mayor of Garratt
12 — Provoked Husband
Le Déserteur Français, ...Première
13 — Entire French Performance
Les Deux Arlequins de Bergame, ...Première
Annette et Lubin
Les Trois Quakers
15 — The Roman Father
Le Déserteur Français

Dec. 17 — The Child of Nature
Miss in Her Teens
19 — The Father, or American
Shandyism, ...1st Presentation here
La Belle Dorothée
20 — Mahomet, or le Fanatisme
[The first French Tragedy ever performed in America.]
Les Caprices de Galathée
22 — The Highland Reel
Barnaby Brittle
23 — Douglas, or The Noble Scot
La Belle Dorothée
26 — The Beggar's Opera
Devil on Two Sticks
29 — Belle's Stratagem
The Spoiled Child
31 — Robin Hood
Devil on Two Sticks

1795

Jan. 2 — Love's Frailties, ...Never performed in America
Rosina, or Love in a Cottage
8 — As You Like It
Three Weeks After Marriage, ..Postponed from Jan. 5th
9 — Henry the Second, ...Never performed in America
Mirza and Lindor
12 — Cymon and Sylvia
Devil on Two Sticks
14 — Love Makes A Man
The Romp
16 — Love's Frailties
Love in a Camp
19 — The Woodman
The Lying Valet
21 — More Ways Than One
Merry Mourners
23 — As You Like It
The Rival Candidates
26 — Maid of the Mill
Unfortunate Family
28 — The Surrender of Calais
The Son-in-Law
30 — He Would Be a Soldier
Who's the Dupe?

Feb. 4 — Know Your Own Mind
The Tamer Tamed
7 — A Bold Stroke for a Husband
The Singular Marriage, ...Never performed here
Race-Week
Feb. 9-14
9 — Lionel and Clarissa
La Forêt Noire
10 — Cymon and Sylvia
Mirza and Lindor

Feb. 11 — Duplicity
Genevieve of Brabant
12 — The Grecian Daughter
Don Juan
13 — The Jealous Wife
Cupid's Revenge
14 — Louis XVI
Farmhouse
16 — Beggar's Opera
(By desire of the Jockey Club)
The Spoiled Child
18 — Bold Stroke for a Husband
The Death of Capt. Cook
20 — The Suspicious Husband
The Deserter
21 — Duenna
The Singular Marriage
23 — The Recruiting Officer
The Paddock
25 — The English Merchant
The Elopement, or A Trip to the
Charleston Races, ...Benefit Mr. J. Kenna
27 — The Brother Quakers, A new Ballet never performed here
Ways and Means, ...Benefit Miss Sully and Mr. Sully

Mar. 2 — The West Indian
Harlequin's Invasion, ...Benefit Mr. West
Speaking Pantomime, first time in America
4 — The Haunted Tower
The Adventures of a Shawl, ...Benefit Mr. Hamilton
6 — The Beaux' Stratagem
No Song, No Supper, ...Benefit Mr. Chambers
9 — Fontainebleau, A comic Opera never performed in America
The Lion with the Thorn, ...Benefit Mrs. Bignall

New Pantomime

11 — Road to Ruin
Harlequin Protected by Neptune,..Benefit Mr. M. Sully
13 — The Duenna
The Mayor of Garratt, ...Benefit Mrs. Pick
16 — The Clandestine Marriage
The American Heroine, ...Benefit Mrs. Placide
18 — Inkle and Yarico
The Prize, or 2. 5. 3. 8., ...Benefit Mr. J. West

Never performed in America

20 — The Wonder
The Rival Candidates, ...Benefit of the Orphans
23 — Such Things Are
The Devil to Pay
Christian Sultan, ...Benefit Mr. Chambers
25 — Countess of Salisbury
The Prize, or 2. 5. 3. 8., ...Benefit Mrs. Kenna
27 — The Foundling
Jupiter and Europa

SEASON 1794-5

Easter Monday

Apl. 6 — Henry IV, or The Humours of Sir John Falstaff
Ballet, Miller & Collier (First presentation here)
The Embarrassment of Error, or A Generous Tar
(An Original Farce by a Gentleman of Charleston)
9 — The Belle's Stratagem
The Prize
11 — The Young Quaker
The Poor Soldier, ..Benefit Mr. Snyder, the Box Keeper
13 — The Earl of Warwick, or Margaret of Anjou
The Citizen, ...Benefit Mr. Edgar
15 — She Stoops to Conquer
Four Valiant Brothers, ...Benefit Master Duport
17 — The Rivals
The Cooper, or The Amorous Guardian
Jupiter and Europa,...Benefit Mrs. Val, Mrs. Douvillier, Mr. Francisqui
20 — The Jew, or The Benevolent Hebrew
The Waterman
23 — Alexander the Great
Naval Engagement between the Brutus and the Alfred and Sir Charles Grey off Charleston Harbor — Rosina, or Love in a Cottage, 2nd Benefit Mr. Edgar

May 7 — American National Military Piece in 4 Acts, called America Preserved, or The Americans and French at the Siege of Yorktown, (by Rev. John Paul Coste, French Protestant Minister in Charleston, S. C.)
Grand Ballet — Pantomime, Samson, or The Treachery of Delilah, ..First Charleston presentation
New Scenery by M. Audin, Benefit Messrs. Val and Douvillier

OPERAS AND PANTOMIMES GIVEN BY WEST AND BIGNALL

SEASON OF 1795

Jan. 12 — Cymon and Sylvia
22 — Maid of The Mill
24 — Rival Candidates
28 — Son-in-Law

Feb. 14 — Highland Reel and Forêt Noire
16 — Beggar's Opera
19 — Deserter
21 — Oscar and Malvina

Mar. 4 — Haunted Tower, ...Horace
6 — No Song, No Supper
9 — Fontainebleau, ...Shield
13 — Duenna
20 — Rival Candidates
25 — Devil to Pay

Apl. 11 — Poor Soldier
20 — Waterman
22 — Rosina

THE FRENCH PLAYERS' SUMMER SEASON, 1795

Although the summer breezes blow in from the ocean with freshening coolness in the early morning and after sundown, and although the thermometer often registers higher in northern cities, the humidity in this section often makes of semi-tropical Charleston a wilted bouquet in the noon-tide hours — so all who can, hie them for the summer months to cooler climes.

However, the enforced stay-at-homes welcomed the merry-makings of the Frenchmen at the theatre, for they could wield their large palmetto-, or turkey-tail-feather fans as well in the theatre as at home.

The French Comedians gave a rechauffé of the comedies, farces and ballet-pantomimes of the winter season; with the introduction of six new pieces to their credit.

The first, "Prince Chimney-Sweep," a farce, was undoubtedly of local origin, with laughable situations woven around the little darky who used to be employed by all householders in the fall to mount the chimneys, brush in hand, and, while he climbed, swept down the accumulated soot, and, on arriving at the top, emerged from the chimneypot with a victorious song of "Ro, Ro, Ro, Ro;" and the children always called him "Ro-Ro."

The Ballet-Pantomime of "The Rosebush of Salency," and "False Magic," an Opera in two acts, were the most ambitious of their original introductions, but the French Pantomimes were always elaborately and beautifully staged and they excelled in the minutiae of stage-settings and the harmony and grace of their costumes, true to their Gallic tradition; and they adored the ballet in which centered their highest hopes of an

evening's success; so "Crispin Médecin" and "The Three Sultans" were no doubt well put upon the stage, as well as the merry farce, "Ling-Ling, or the Cobbler's Household," for the actors always played the comic parts with great gusto and skill, and with sufficient art to let wit, and not simply oddities of movement or expression, make the hit, which were so much relied upon in O'Keefe's nonsensical extravaganzas.

The First Production in Charleston of the Opera in Two Acts, False Magic, and the following:

Ballet-Pantomime, Rosebush of Salency
Crispin Médecin, Ballet-Pantomime
The Farce, Prince Chimney-Sweep
Farce, Ling-Ling, or the Cobbler's Household and the Pantomime of the Three Sultans.

PLAYS AT THE CHARLESTON THEATRE BY THE FRENCH COMEDIANS, SUMMER SEASON OF 1795.

1795

May 20 — Two Hunters and the Milkmaid
The Prince Chimney-Sweep (Farce), ...First time
La Forêt Noire
22 — Ling-Ling, or The Cobbler's Household, ...First time
The Reasonable Fool
The Old Soldier
25 — The Deserter
Harlequin Doctor
28 — Le Tableau Parlant
Samson, or The Treachery of Delilah
June 1 — Opera in Two Acts called The False Magic, or
Tutor in Love with His Pupil, Never performed here
The Amorous Guardian
3 — False Magic
The Broken Milk Pot
6 — L'Amant Statue
Jupiter and Europa
9 — Zémire and Azor
The Poacher, or the Game Law
11 — L'Amant Statue
The Cooper
Harlequin Balloonist
16 — Musical Madness
The Rose and the Bud
May 18 — False Magic
The Militiaman
20 — The Recapture of Toulon, or The Young Female Soldier
Le Médecin Malgré Lui

May 22 — The False Magic
Recapture of Toulon
25 — Mélomanie
The Militiaman
29 — The Three Sultans, ...First time here
The Twenty-Eighth of June, 1776
July 1 — Crispin Médecin, ...First time here
Grand Pastoral Pantomime
The Rosebush of Salency, or Virtue
Rewarded, ...First time here

CHAPTER XII

Mr. Sollee's Season at the Church-Street Theatre, 1795-6.

Introducing to Charleston the brilliant Opera and Oratorio Singer, Mrs. Pownall.

Charlotte and Mary Wrighten make their débuts on this stage.

Mr. and Mrs. Turnbull, from London, make their first American appearance.

Mr. Jones, the Comedian and Manager.

Mr. Chalmers, who inaugurated the first Charleston *Star* Performances.

The first American production of the Apotheosis of Franklin, by Mons. Audin, Jr., "The most ambitious attempt yet made in this country in the way of scenic productions."—G. O. Seilhamer, in "History of the American Theatre."

CHAPTER XII

MR. SOLLEE'S SEASON OF 1795-6

Mr. Sollee, who was the Proprietor of the Church-Street Theatre during Mr. Edgar's disastrous season, began looking around for fresh material, and when the Boston Theatre Company disbanded during the summer of 1795 he engaged a number of the Boston Players and formed a very strong company, including Mrs. Pownall with her daughters, the Misses Wrighten, from London; Mr. and Mrs. Jones; Mr. and Mrs. Collins; Mr. and Mrs. Hellyer; Mr. and Mrs. Miller of the Old American Company; Mr. Patterson, a dancer; Mr. and Mrs. Turnbull, "Just from London;" and the Messrs. Hipworth, Bartlett, Heely, Fawcett, and Watts.

A note in the *Gazette* says: "With this company is Mr. Turnbull just from London, who is the Poet Laureate, and Mr. and Mrs. King of the Old American Company will join Mr. Sollee's forces later." Mr. Audin, the scene-painter, who had been with the Charleston Theatre ever since its erection, was procured for this season by Mr. Sollee, and Mr. Graupner was engaged as leader of the orchestra.

The Charleston season of 1795 was the most brilliant musical year that music-loving Charleston people had yet known.

Soon after the arrival of Mr. Sollee's company, Mrs. Pownall, who had a glorious voice, assisted in Mr. Leroy's Grand Concert in the Assembly Room of Williams's Coffee-House, singing French and English songs. There were Concertos, Symphonies and Favorite

Overtures, piano-forte and violin, and selected pieces on the Spanish Guitar.

A more ambitious Concert was given at the City Theatre for the benefit of Messieurs Petit and Villars; Mons. Poiteaux's Grand Concert had an Orchestra of thirty pieces, and Mrs. Pownall's Sacred Concert was of such high artistic excellence that the programme will be inserted later.

French music and Chinese fireworks were given every fortnight by Citizen Bulit; Citizen Cornet had "an excellent French Orchestra" at his Vauxhall Gardens; and the St. Cecilia Society was giving at regular intervals its Classic Concerts.

Mr. Sollee's Company began the season November 10, 1795, and closed early in May, 1796. It was a brilliant season and the company included some of the best actors and actresses that had yet come to America.

Mrs. Pownall was a brilliant figure in both acting and singing parts; she made her début in Garrick's Company at Drury Lane, and it was said in 1784 that she could not be equaled on the stage. She played opposite John Philip Kemble in a number of characters. As a singer she was surpassed only by Mrs. Billington and Mrs. Oldmixon. Her two young daughters by a former marriage in England, Mary and Charlotte Wrighten, although having first appeared in America in a concert in Boston with their mother, made their theatrical débuts here, and soon rose from small parts to leading rôles. Charlotte Wrighten gave a sensational anticlimax to the Charleston season by eloping with Alexander Placide.

A number of new plays were given with éclat. Mrs.

Pownall introduced many beautiful songs and the pantomime, "The Apotheosis of Franklin," by M. Audin, was a notable production; but, notwithstanding all this, the season was fraught with harassment and unrest and there was a minor chord throughout.

The political sky was overcast at home and abroad. Letters from France gave dismal accounts of the slow subsidence of the deadly flood of the French Revolution. The Charlestonians had just celebrated the anniversary of the capture of Lord Cornwallis and his army "with the most enthusiastic and grateful joy." A letter in the *Gazette,* describing the scene at the Champs de Mars with the parading of the regiments, said; "The number of splendid equipages and well-dressed company which attended formed the most gay and enchanting spectacle this city ever exhibited."

Charleston's three daily newspapers carried letters from Washington and the Northern cities as well as from Paris and London, and both of the latter sent fashion-notes, and the costumes worn at the Queen's Drawing-Rooms were reported in full, and the *Columbian Herald* was printing the premières at Drury Lane and Covent Garden, with criticisms from the English papers; so Charlestonians kept well abreast of the times.

Running opposition theatres in a place so small as Charleston it was inevitable that bad feeling should arise among the members of the opposing ranks. The Frenchmen, who had taken up their permanent abode here, considered that they had prior right, by fact of residence, and forgot entirely that a certain loyalty should have been given the English Manager, who did

all in his power to help them get established. Gratitude seems to have been entirely lacking, and they did all they could to force out Mr. West and his company.

The first word theatric of the 1795-6 season was a letter from Mr. West from the Richmond Theatre, October 4, 1795, to the "Worthy Friends and Patrons of the Charleston Theatre," contradicting a malicious report of his death, and stating that he expected to return with his company to Charleston in January.

Mr. Sollee's season of six months began three months before the Charleston Theatre was opened, so he had a clear field and the entire city to draw from for his earliest audiences, and his first-class company was given an enthusiastic reception.

CITY GAZETTE AND DAILY ADVERTISER

Friday, Nov. 6, 1795.

Yesterday arrived the sloop *Catherine* (Barstow) from Boston and the brig *Betsey* (Hunt) from Philadelphia.

Mr. Sollee, proprietor of the Church-Street or City Theatre, came passenger in the sloop from Boston, along with the following Theatric Corps: The celebrated Mrs. Pownall, formerly Mrs. Wrighten, and the two Misses Wrighten, her daughters; Mr. Jones, the celebrated comic performer and Mrs. Jones; Mr. and Mrs. Collins, the favorites of the Boston stage; Mr. and Mrs. Turnbull, just arrived from the London stage; Mr. and Mrs. Mill from the New York company; Mrs. Helyer; Messieurs Hipworth, Patterson, Bartlett and Healey; also two musicians, Mr. Bergman, formerly the leader of the Philadelphia Orchestra, and Mr. Graupner, the great hautboy-player. M. Audin, the ingenious scene-painter is with the above company. Mr. and Mrs. King, comedians of high character are to be here in the first vessel. Mr. Watts, who arrived some days ago, is also engaged. We are informed that Mr. Jones is looked up to as the principal Manager of the company. From the celebrity which some of the above named persons have acquired on the stages of the Northern States, there is reason to expect that our theatrical amusements the ensuing season will be equal at least, to any which the citizens of Charleston have hitherto been furnished with.

Mr. Chambers, late of the Charleston Theatre, we are told, is now with the Boston company.

Mrs. Pownall was considered the ranking English

actress that had yet been brought to America, and her versatility and amiability and her dominant characteristic of generous appreciation of others' abilities, made her a most wonderful acquisition to a company. One of the London wits suggested that she be painted as the Goddess of Mirth attended by St. Cecilia. Mr. Jones was a comedian of high rank, who expressed any and everything with a joyous exuberance and a vivid and engaging plasticity, and was a constant delight. It was, in fact, an exceptionally fine company.

The announcement of the opening of the Church-Street Theatre was made on November 7, and the bill followed the next day and on the opening day, November 10:

THE CITY THEATRE IN CHURCH STREET

Will Open This Evening
with the play of
Every One has his Faults, and the
Musical Farce of the
Double Disguise.

Characters of the Comedy

Lord Norland, ...Mr. Turnbull
Sir Robert Ramble, ...Mr. Hipworth
Mr. Solus, ...Mr. Jones
Mr. Harmony, ...Mr. Collins
Mr. Placid, ...Mr. Bartlett
Mr. Irwin, ...Mr. Patterson
Hammond, ...Mr. Heely
Porter, ...Mr. Miller

Servants, etc.

Lady Eleanor Irwin, ...Mrs. Jones
Mrs. Placid, ...Mrs. Pownall
Miss Spinster, ...Mrs. Turnbull
Miss Woobarn, ...Miss C. Wrighten

Characters of the Farce

Lord Hartwell, ...Mr. Hipworth
Sir Richard Evergreen, ...Mr. Turnbull
Tinsel, ...Mr. Jones
Sam, ...Mr. Miller
Emily, ...Miss C. Wrighten
Miss Dorothy Evergreen, ...Mrs. Miller
Rose, (an Irish Maid), ...Mrs. Pownall

Mrs. Pownall will sing a Favorite Song between the 2nd and 3rd Acts and will speak the Epilogue.

Mr. Graupner will play a Concerto on the Hautboy.

N. B. Miss Wrighten is a pupil of Mrs. Pownall and this will be her first appearance on any stage.

In the opening criticisms of Mr. Sollee's company, admiration was expressed first for Mr. Sollee—

"Who, though cramped in every former exertion of his to render theatrical amusements entertaining, has surmounted every difficulty and gratified that ardent wish he ever manifested of showing to the lovers of the drama, that he can distinguish between real and superficial merit, by introducing to this city the most eminent dramatic characters in America.

"When I view the vocal and, I may add, the inimitable general theatrical powers of Mrs. Pownall, the also inimitable comic powers of Mr. Jones, I am solaced in the reflection that my assertions will stand the test of truth.

"The plaudits of a very full house on Tuesday evening confirm me in the opinion, and I am convinced that a Charleston audience will never be wanting to give every encouragement to such exertions, and thereby pay a due respect to merit."

"A Correspondent" in an appreciation of Mr. Hipworth in the first evening's performance, "Every One Has His Faults," says:

The comedy by Mrs. Inchbald has just lately been given by the same players in Boston — and that the universal excellence of Mr. Hipworth as *Sir Robert Rumble* makes a distinct eulogium on the part wholly superfluous. A Boston critic said of him: "We have seen no pupil of Thespis who fills to perfection so wide a sphere of acting and at the same time so far distances competition in all his characters."

Continuing the course that has been followed from the first in this work, to let the press tell the story of

its day, criticisms of plays and characters as they occurred are here quoted verbatim.

The second-night's performance in the comedy of "The Dramatist," Mr. Hipworth in the character of *Vapid* met with general and repeated applause from all sides of the house, which was crowded with a polite audience. Mr. Jones in *Floriville*, may on the whole, be considered as a phenomenon of this age. Mr. Turnbull, Mr. Collins, Mr. Patterson, Mr. Heely and Mr. Bartlett met with universal applause. Mrs. Collins, made her appearance for the first time in the character of *Mariana*, and was received with repeated testimonials of approbation. Her figure is elegant, her features expressive, and her actions graceful.

Mrs. Jones, Mrs. Miller, and Mrs. Hellyer acquitted themselves with equal propriety.

On the third evening, after witnessing "Such Things Are" Mr. Collins in the character of the *Sultan*, acquitted himself with great propriety, his attitudes were graceful and actions easy. Mrs. Pownall performed *Lady Tremor* with much spirit and accuracy, and sang the song of "Sweet Echo" with variety of taste and judgment; she was accompanied by Mr. Graupner on the hautboy. In justice to Miss C. Wrighten, she is a very improving performer, and merits the highest encomiums. Mrs. Jones, who performed the *Female Prisoner*, is also entitled to the warmest praise.

It seems that in accepting the verdict of the critics of the day, players can be put before the public in their truest lights; for it is not "hear-say," but dramatic history from its original sources.

Mr. Sollee's Theatrical Manager, Mr. Jones, had chosen for this season the most popular English plays, opening with one of Mrs. Inchbald's Comedies, "Every One Has His Faults," which held the stage for many years.

The performances comprised every evening a tragedy or a comedy followed by a farce, and after this, songs and pantomimes and diversions of various sorts.

THEATRICAL CRITICISM

Nov. 7, 1795.

The serious comedy of "The Jew" was performed at the City Theatre on Tuesday evening, Nov. 24, to a numerous and polite audience in a style which throws into the background, every dramatic exhibition this town had ever before witnessed. Mr. Hipworth, for the first time, universally pleased; in his representation of the

benevolent *Sheva*, he performed his part with a feeling that drew tears from many of the spectators.

Mr. Turnbull did *Sir Stephen* with proper dignity:— Messrs. Fawcett and Collins, as *Frederick* and *Charles* did the parts in that style of genteel comedy which merited and met with applause.

Mrs. Jones played *Eliza* with feeling and propriety and Mrs. Miller was truly comic in *Dorcas*. The farce of "The Romp" showed Miss M. Wrighten in the pleasing light of an improving actress in *Priscilla*.

Jones in the play and Watty in the farce showed that Thalia marked them for the ludicrous and wild.

Individuals were allowed free scope in advancing their opinions on the theatrical performances, pro and con, and many of these received replies:

In the play of "The Citizen" on December 1, many parts were criticised by "A Former Correspondent," and he refers to one of his favorites:

Mrs. Collins in the arduous character of *Maria* was at once correct and uncommonly spirited; her second scene of the first act drew peals of applause and had the mean and interested author of the piece signed "Theatricus" been present and been capable of a sensation of shame, he must have blushed for his contemptible remark that "Mrs. Collins was left to romp it in *Penelope*."

Whenever "The School for Scandal," or "She Stoops to Conquer," was announced a full house could be counted upon. These wonderful old English comedies and their like have the sustaining quality of merit that carries them through the centuries with unabated power to please. So on December 9, Sheridan's sparkling masterpiece, with its delightful contrasts of light and shade, of harmony and color, with Mrs. Pownall as an unsurpassed *Lady Teazle*, was a brilliant success.

JAN. 4, 1796.....THEATRICAL.....

We are happy to hear that the celebrated Mr. Chalmers, late of the Philadelphia Theatre has accepted an engagement from the Manager of the Church-Street Theatre. The professional eminence and distinguished merit of this gentleman, both in England and America, render his appearance on our boards an incident very grateful to the friends of the drama. Mr. Chalmers is a valuable acquisition to the City Theatre, every one that has seen him will allow, and that he is the best performer in top-comedy that ever

MR. CHALMERS

graced the Charleston boards, every judge of acting must acknowledge. What a feast then, may the lovers of the Drama expect when they are informed that the part of *Belcour* in the West Indian is his *chef-d'oeuvre*, etc.

Mr. Chalmers may be said to have inaugurated the *Star* system in Charleston, followed next by Mrs. Whitlock, for from his first appearance, he took the leading rôles in all the plays, of which he made the choice. With the advent of this young English actor, his clothes no doubt were of almost as much importance to the audience as his acting, and it is known, from the fashion letters and advertisements, about what he was wearing: "Taylors and Habit-Makers just *arrived from London* were offering a fine line of Gentlemens' Mercery." The Jewelers were showing silver and steel-mounted Dress swords; "Silver patent shoe-clasps," etc.

"Hair Powder and Cosmetics" brought to the notice of the public by "Louis Martin Peruke-maker and Hairdresser from Paris."

"Gentlemen's cloathes" included blue broadcloth coats with gilt buttons; dove-coloured broadcloth coats with white metal buttons; "black sattin small cloathes and waistcoats of the same; waistcoats tamboured round the edges; and plain and clouded silk stockings."

And the dressing of the ladies opposite him as heroines was no less interesting to the young hero, and everybody had read in the *Columbian Herald* the last French Fashion letter on Female Dress, which gave the following account of the modes of the day:

The Greek dress among the females is already out of fashion; they now wear a kind of chemise-robe, with a girdle which is worn very high. Though the dress of both sexes is very simple, it is nevertheless extremely expensive because of the many particular ornaments belonging thereto.

For Evening-Dress, the hair in small curls, and the hind-hair in ringlets. Bandeaux of silver tissue, and colours intertwined in the

hair and two white ostrich feathers at the side or in front are also worn.

For Morning-Dress: Brunswick Chemise of fine India muslin, scalloped and embroidered at the bottom. Long sleeves, sash of white sattin ribband, and large muslin handkerchief around the neck. Jonquil gloves and yellow shoes. The hair in light curls and Gipsy straw bonnet, with a wreath of flowers around the middle.

These, with additions and variations, were the costumes of the day.

On January 18 "will be presented the celebrated Tragedy of 'Hamlet,' with a new Parlour Scene executed in the most masterly manner, by Mr. Audin and superior to any that has ever been exhibited in Charleston!".....", Hamlet in a new Parlour! Nay, shut out such a vision, and the murderous efforts of realism to strangle idealism;—but this was no more of an anachronism than David Garrick's in his performance of Macbeth, when he attired himself in a scarlet coat, silk stockings, and powdered wig, and all the Witches were dressed in charming satin costumes and rouged and powdered to be-witch instead of attending to their boiling caldron. In those days, most flagrant indignities were heaped upon the Immortal Bard's works.

It had been said of the young Misses Wrighten, soon after their débuts, that they gave great promise, and that from the diligent study of their parts, added to the abilities of their Instructress, their mother, Mrs. Pownall, and their own personal charms, a great deal was expected of them.

Charlotte had succeeded so well that she was given the difficult role of *Ophelia* to the *Hamlet* of Mr. Chalmers, his first Shakspearian tragedy on this stage. To play opposite so finished an artist was a great honor for the young girl, who acquitted herself creditably.

SOLLEE'S SEASON 1795-6

The City Theatre's benefits began on February 12. Quotations from the bills will show the scope of the season's productions:

Friday, Jan. 12.....Benefit Mrs. Jones.
Tragedy of "Romeo and Juliet"

Romeo, Mr. Chalmers.....*Juliet*, Mrs. Jones

In the Funeral Procession, the Solemn Dirge to be sung by Messrs. Collins and Bartlett, Mrs. Hellyer and the Miss Wrightens, and Mrs. Pownall will sing the celebrated song from Handel's Oratorio of "Judas Maccabeus," "Return, O, God of Hosts."

A Dissertation on Hobby Horses by Mr. Jones, likewise the comic songs: "Frolics of Queen Mab;" "Murder in Irish," and "A Twiggle and a Friz," in the character of a hunch-backed Barber.

"A little Merry He" to be sung by Master Jones, being but three years and a half old; to which will be added the musical farce of "The Agreeable Surprise;" to conclude with Mr. Jones in the character of Harlequin who will fly from the back of the stage to the extent of the Gallery and down again.

Feb. 13, 1796.....Notice.....City Theatre.

The Long Room lately built adjoining the City Theatre will be in readiness for the accommodation of the Public on Tuesday next, and during Race-Week, as a Coffee-House. Should a Party wish to be accommodated with a room to celebrate the birthday of General Washington in or for any other public occasion, this room will be at their service.

Both the Charleston Theatre, which had opened its doors in January, and the City Theatre played to full houses, as usual, during Race-Week, giving performances every evening.

Feb. 16.....Mrs. Pownall's Benefit Comedy "The Young Quaker" and the Musical Entertainment of "Rosina." An Address to the Ladies of Charleston set to music and delivered by Mrs. Pownall, and the favourite songs: "Auld Robin Gray," and "Tally Ho!" "Auld Long Syne" was introduced to the public in the opera of "Rosina."

Feb. 22.....Mr. Chalmers' Benefit, "The Tragedy of Richard the Third." *King Richard* — Mr. Chalmers, and the Musical Entertainment, "The Purse." A Song in celebration of Washington and Liberty, written and sung by Mrs. Pownall, and Between the Acts and the Farce, A Serio-Comic, Prosaical, Poetical, Rhapsodical, Whimsical Paraphrase on Shakspeare's Seven Ages, by Mr. Chalmers.

A criticism of Mr. Chalmers said that he was truly great in the portrayal of his characters: "The manly

ease, the natural grace, dignity, and feeling which he displays in difficult parts exhibit a specimen of masterly acting that we do not recollect having ever seen excelled."

February 17, Mr. Chalmers again played "Hamlet," and on February 19, he was *Vapid* in "The Dramatist," of which an advance notice said: "The City Theatre, we venture to prophesy, will be a Bumper this evening, *Vapid* in 'The Dramatist' is said to be one of Mr. Chalmers' most shining characters."

"The School for Scandal" was generally requested during Race-Week, and it was given February 20, with Mr. Chalmers as *Charles Surface,* Mr. Jones as *Sir Peter Teazle,* and Mrs. Jones as *Lady Teazle.*

February 24, Mr. Chalmers played *Shylock* in "The Merchant of Venice," and *Petruchio* in the double bill; February 29, *Horatio* in the "Fair Penitent," and in "Notoriety" he was *Nominal* with the original Epilogue for Mr. Collins's benefit. He took the part of *Chaumont* in "The Orphan;" *Jack Hustings* in Cumberland's "Natural Son," and *Comus the Entertainer* in the Masque following — in fact he took the lead in all the male rôles of all the Benefits, and in all the plays besides.

They had to be all-round actors in those days of Stock, says Daniel Frohman, when an actor to be engaged was expected to have a repertoire of some seventy plays, and all the popular Shakspeares. ..... The minor characters in those old stock companies were as highly trained actors as our Stars to-day. Each city had its own stock company, and a great Star would go on tour alone, counting on the support of that local company. He would write ahead that he was coming, give a few directions, and those highly trained actors of the Stock Companies would be ready after one rehearsal, to support him.

The Stage was not a precarious living then, an actor was engaged for fifty-two weeks, season after season, and many actors remained with the same Manager for years.

Charlestonians were always very cordial to the members of their Stock Companies, and the leading lights were often the recipients of social courtesies, and citizens with any musical or histrionic ability were constantly offering their services to the Managers for the pleasure of adding their mite to the theatrical entertainments of the city. So in Mr. Collins's Benefit "A Hunting Song," "Bachelor's Hall," by a Gentleman resident of this city was introduced.

March 12—Mr. Turnbull's Benefit "The Orphan" and "The Deuce is in Him," Comic Songs by Mr. Jones and Mr. Henderson; a Pastoral Ballad by Mrs. Hellyer and a Musical Interlude by Mrs. Turnbull called "The Recruit."

The Masques and Interludes so often mentioned in old play-bills, were less than plays and more than pantomimes. The Masques were illustrated with scenic effects and with elaborate stage-settings, and introduced popular music; and the Pasticcio-operas, such as "Love in a Village," "Lionel and Clarissa," etc., were full of light Italian songs. Interludes were generally satirical dialogues on the vices and follies of the times, shorter and less ambitious in construction than a play, but filled with simple wit, which appealed to all classes, though often rude and racy in tone.

March 21—Announcement of Mrs. Pownall's Sacred Concert; and as this was arranged for, at the time of her theatrical engagement by Mr. Sollee, and considered by her, a part of her regular performances at the Theatre, it is included here.

SACRED MUSIC

Mrs. Pownall respectfully acquaints the Public that, agreeable to her engagement with Mr. Sollee, previous to her coming to

Charleston, she is entitled to his Theatre on Thursday, the 24th instant.

Religious subjects being best adapted to Passion Week, she has for that Evening prepared a Grand Concert Spiritual, or Spiritual Concert; consisting chiefly of Overtures, Songs, and Duets, selected from the most celebrated of Handel's Oratorios, "The Messiah," "Judas Maccabeus," "Esther," Etc., arranged as follows:

Act 1st

Overture to "The Messiah," with Recitative "Comfort Ye, My People, Every Valley Shall be Exalted," by Mrs. Pownall.

Martini's Grand Overture to "Henry IV," Song from the Messiah, "He Was Despised," to conclude with, "But Thou Didst not Leave his Soul in Hell," by Mrs. Pownall.

Duet from "Judas Maccabeus," "From this Dread Scene, These Adverse Powers," by Mrs. Pownall and Miss C. Wrighten.

Overture in "Samson," Handel.

Act 2nd

Overture, Occasional Oratorio, Handel.

Song from "L'Allegro," and "Il Penseroso," "Sweet Bird," by Mrs. Pownall, accompanied on the Violin by Mons. Petit.

Concerto Pianoforte, by Mr. De Villiers.

Song from "The Messiah," "Rejoice Greatly, O Daughter of Sion," by Mrs. Pownall.

Concerto Clarinet, by Mons. Foucard.

Song from "The Messiah," "He Shall Feed his Flock Like a Shepherd," by Mrs. Pownall.

Duet from Judas Maccabeus, "O Lovely Peace, With Plenty Crown'd," by Mrs. Pownall and Miss Wrighten.

Overture to Esther, Handel.

N. B. Silence is requested during the performance of the several pieces.

The Concert to begin at 7 o'clock, precisely. Doors will be open at six. Tickets to be had of Mrs. Pownall, at Mr. Rogers's, No. 24 Broad Street and at the Box Office of the Theatre, at 5s. each.

"The Mountaineers," the new comic opera just arrived in Charleston, was one of Colman's greatest favorites, and all the leading actors of the day vied with one another in their delineations of the Mad-Lover, *Octavian*, and it could not have been presented through a more acceptable medium than Mr. Chalmers. This was for Mr. Hellyer's benefit, followed by the old farce, "High Life below Stairs."

"Macbeth," with Mr. Chalmers in the title, was the major attraction for the benefit of the Manager, Mr. Jones. This gentleman was an excellent comedian, who

believed in the gospel of laughter; and after the opera, "The Children of the Wood," he spread gales of mirth around him by his own jollity and facial expression in the fetching ditty called "Vastly Shocking," and with Mr. Collins's help gave, "In Honor of St. Patrick," the "Learned Pig, Bow-WOW-Wow," and "Murder in English," winding up with the "Jealous Man," assisted by the charming young Mary Wrighten, who had inherited much of her mother's musical talent.

March 31 — Mr. Bartlett's benefit, after a Comedy, showed three favorite old English sops to popularity, a Masque, an Interlude, and a Catch. "The Grand Masque of Comus, or The Enchanted Wood," music by Dr. Arne, introduced mystic stage-settings and was filled with lovely airs. It is said that some of the scenic effects devised by Inigo Jones for old English Masques would tax the powers of a modern artist to equal.

The Interlude, "Morning, Noon, and Night," began with an invocation to Aurora, sung by Misses M. and C. Wrighten, and the "Catch," which was similar to a musical "round," was sung by Messrs. Bartlett and Collins.

The whole concluded with the "Triumph of Virtue over Vice and Dissatisfaction," sung by Mrs. Pownall and Mr. Henderson.

April 1 — "Columbus, or America Discovered" — showed in the first descriptive paragraph "A beautiful view leading to the Temple of the Sun and an *awful* representation of a Burning Mountain" — (which did not in the least wound the feelings of the scene-painter.)

Apr. 2 — Benefit of MISS C. WRIGHTEN.
A new farce "Two Strings to Your Bow," and a Musical enter-

tainment introducing many popular songs, among them a new one by Mrs. Pownall: "Never Say No, When You Mean to say Yes!"

Apr. 7 — 1796

CITY THEATRE

For the Benefit of Mr. Collins
This Evening, the 7th instant
Will be Presented
Farquhar's Celebrated Comedy of
"The Recruiting Officer"

Captain Plume, ...Mr. Chalmers
Captain Brazen, ...Mr. Jones
Justice Balance, ...Mr. Turnbull
Worthy, ...Mr. Bartlett
Bullock, ...Mr. Henderson
Thomas Appletree, ...Mr. Heeley
Costar Pearmain, ...Mr. Watts
Constable, ...Mr. Fawcett
Welch Collier, ...Mr. Patterson
Servant, ...Mr. Parsons
Sergeant Kite, ...Mr. Collins
Sylvia, ...Miss M. Wrighten
Melinda, ...Mrs. Graupner (first appearance)
Rose, ...Mrs. Henderson

In the course of the evening's Entertainment,
A Comic Song, "Little Farthing Rush Light" by
Mr. Jones
Quarrelling Duet from the Haunted Tower by the
Miss Wrightens
Comic Song by Mr. Henderson
A Celebrated Hunting Song "Come, Rouse from Your Trances"
Mrs. Pownall
With a Burletta in One Act, called
The Irish Taylor, or
The Humours of the Thimble (never shown here)
With the new Grand Overture and Accompanyments
The composition of the celebrated Mr. Taylor

Roger McStrong (the Irish Taylor), ...Mr. Collins
Captain Bounce, ...Mr. Bartlett
Betty, ...Mrs. Graupner

Between the Burletta and Entertainment

Several much admired Airs on the Irish Bag-Pipes by Mr. Corbett, (who has at the solicitations of several respectable characters obligingly consented, without any view to emolument, to exert his very eminent abilities for that night only).[1]

To which will be added
"Miss in Her Teens"

Captain Flash, ...Mr. Jones
Captain Lovett, ...Mr. Fawcett
Puff, ...Mr. Turnbull
Jaspar, ...Mr. Watts

[1] Mr. Corbett was proprietor of the Thatched Cabin.

Fribble, ...Mr. Bartlett
Tag, ...Mrs. Jones

Miss Biddy, with an Epilogue written for the occasion
Mrs. Collins

Tickets to be had of Mr. Collins, at Mrs. Ramage's, Meeting Street, at the Thatched Cabin and at the Office of the Theatre, where places for the boxes may be taken.

Apr. 7

CITY THEATRE

The Subscriber takes the liberty of recommending to the favour of a generous Public, Mr. Audin, Painter and Director of the Sceneries of the City Theatre, whose talents in that line are surpassed by none on the Continent. His merit and upright conduct during the space of near three years, have induced the subscriber to allow him a benefit's night in hopes that the Public will reward the artist, whose works they have so often applauded.

John Sollee.

It was unanimously decided by Mr. Jones, the Manager, and all the members of the City Theatre to grant this request with the greatest cordiality and support.

It was advertized:

A NEW PANTOMIME

Never performed anywhere before, called the "Apotheosis of Franklin and his Reception into the Elysian Fields."

The above Pantomime, of which Mr. Audin is the author, is a beautiful one, such a like never was performed on the Continent for the honor and dignity of Americans and to the glories, energies and virtues of Franklin. From scene to scene the company will be more and more surprised; a new Set of Decorations, made on purpose for that Pantomime, with new Dresses and New Musical Grand Overture, agreeable to the subject, executed by the first Musicians.

This was a most ambitious production, and showed how high an order of intelligence and artistic ability Charleston's Scene-Painter possessed. It was fashioned after the style of old English Pantomime and was modeled upon the Masque of Elizabethan and Stuart days, and in its gorgeous scenery and mechanical effects was the forerunner of the latter-day spectacular play. The bills for this very notable American production are given in full.

Apr. 16

CITY THEATRE, CHURCH STREET

For the Benefit of M. Audin, Jun., Painter and Machinist of the said Theatre, This Evening the 16st will be presented the celebrated Tragedy of

"King Richard III"

King Richard, ...Mr. Chalmers
King Henry, ...Mr. Turnbull
Duke of Buckingham, ...Mr. Fawcett
Prince Edward, ...Miss M. Wrighten
Duke of York, ...Mrs. Graupner [recently Mrs. Hellyer]
Stanley, ...Mr. Watts
Ratcliffe, ...Mr. Heeley
Catesby, ...Mr. Bartlett
Oxford, ...Mrs. Henderson
Lord Mayor, ...Mr. Henderson
Officer, ...Mr. Patterson
Richmond, ...Mr. Collins
Queen, ...Mrs. Pownall
Duchess of York, ...Mrs. Turnbull
Lady Anne, ...Miss C. Wrighten

To which will be added, A Grand Allegorical Pantomime called the

"Apotheosis of Franklin, or
His Reception in the Elysian Fields."

The paintings and machinery executed in a masterly manner by Mons. Audin.

Houdon (the Sculptor), ...Mr. Collins
Diard (pupil to Houdon), ...Mr. Watts
Countryman, ...Mr. Jones
Envy, ...Mr. Henderson
Spirit of Philosophy, ...Miss M. Wrighten
Charon, ...Mr. Fawcett
Franklin, ...Mr. Turnbull
Goddess of Fame, ...Master Johnston
Clio (Goddess of History), ...Miss C. Wrighten
Euterpe (Goddess of Music), ...Mrs. Graupner

The spirits of Voltaire, Shakspeare and Sir Isaac Newton,
Messrs. Bartlett, Heeley, and Parsons
Furies, etc., by the rest of the Company.

1st Scene

The 1st Scene represents the statuary, Houdon, at work on the tomb of Franklin; the tomb adorned with two beautiful statues. The 1st represents the United States holding in its right hand the American Eagle: On its left arm a shield and buckler inscribed with these words: "Unitate populoque Americano."

The 2nd represents the Goddess of Prudence holding a tablet with this inscription "Prudentia direxit eum," and on the panel of the tomb "Eripuit fulmen cielo sceptrumque tyrannis."

Act 2nd

1st Scene represents a gloomy cavern through which is seen a view of the river Styx, Charon in his boat and the banks of the Stygian Lake.

2nd Scene

Represents the Elysian Fields; the Goddess of Fame descends and proclaims the virtues of Franklin, who is conducted to the abode of Peace by Philosophy; he meets with Diogenes, the Cynic, who introduces him to all the wise and learned men who inhabit those seats of eternal rest.

The Last Scene

Represents the Temple of Memory adorned with statues and busts of all the deceased Poets, Philosophers and Wise Men. Franklin's bust is placed on a vacant pedestal, facing that of Sir Isaac Newton.

A Dance
By a Young Master of this City.
A Triumphal Hymn

In honor of Franklin sung by the Goddess of Fame and the Goddess of History.

This Pantomime, of which Mr. Audin is the author, is a beautiful one, such as never was performed on the Continent, for the honor and dignity of Americans and to the glory, energy and virtues of Franklin. From scene to scene the spectators will be more and more surprized; a new set of decorations made on purpose, and for no other use but this pantomime, with new dresses and new music, a grand overture suited to the subject and executed by some of the best musicians in this city.

An Ode written by a gentleman of this city to be spoken by Miss C. Wrighten.

As the time drew near for Mr. Chalmers's benefit many things conspired against him; for one reason or another he was compelled, after advertising his Benefit offerings, to change them several times, and his final bill, due to the physical inability of Mrs. Pownall to support him, was not what he wished, and therefore a great disappointment. His *amour propre* was wounded, and his temper was very much affected thereby.

Apr. 19 —

CITY THEATRE

Mr. Chalmers, in announcing his benefit for the 19th instant respectfully begs leave to inform the Public, his engagements with the Theatre are for Benefit Nights. His first engagement concluded with his last benefit and his emoluments for the renewal since that period chiefly depend on the receipts of this. Mrs. Pownall, having laid in yesterday morning, Mr. Chalmers is again under the necessity of changing his play for this evening, and by the strenuous advice of many of his friends, it is altered to the Comedy of "The Dramatist." This was followed by songs and readings, winding up with the farce "The Critic."

Mr. Chalmers, who came to America in 1794, was engaged by Mr. Wignell in his Philadelphia theatre, for the lead in Genteel Comedy; he had made his début at Covent Garden ten years before and had appeared before the King and Queen. After his first appearance in this country as *Vapid* in "The Dramatist," he immediately became "the rage," and it was said "to equal him would be difficult, and to excel him impossible."

Being placed upon such a pedestal, his self-esteem arose to the pitch of egotism, and he was declared to be very selfish. Having been forced to change his bill twice, and piqued at the loss of the support of his leading lady, his musical programme was all upset. In his irritation he wreaked his vengeance on the musicians during the arrangements for the evening, and, due to retaliation by them, his performance was almost a fiasco, as is learned from the following:

TO THE PUBLIC

The Musicians of the City Theatre, sensible of what they owe to the Public, to Mr. Sollee and to themselves, feel themselves called upon to refute the lame apology made by Mr. Chalmers for the silence of the orchestra at his benefit last Tuesday evening. They are informed that that gentleman came forward and declared that the musicians did not attend on account of some differences subsisting between them and the proprietor. They on the contrary assert that their absence was not in consequence of any misunderstanding between Mr. Sollee and them, but from disgust at Mr. Chalmers's demeanor. The fact stands thus: On Monday the 18th instant, Mr. Sollee proposed to the musicians that they should take a benefit on Saturday the 23rd, and they, to accommodate Mr. S. accepted the proposal. On Tuesday, Mr. Chalmers's night, they all punctually attended, but before they entered the orchestra, they deputed Messrs. Daguetty and Graupner to inform Mr. Chalmers of their agreement and to solicit his assistance in the Opera of "The Mountaineers:" But that gentleman, listening only to his own pride and self interest peremptorily refused. Retaliation is just — the musicians withdrew their assistance from *his* entertainments and the orchestra was silent, except that the trios, duets, and songs were accompanied by a single violin. Mr. Chalmers, having pocketed the large proceeds of two benefits, was careless whether or not the public were satisfied, and equally indifferent to the interests of those performers, whose benefits were to come after his.

To which he made answer:

TO THE PUBLIC

Mr. Chalmers, being on the eve of taking his departure from Charleston, occasions his making this trespass on the public; did he remain, he should treat the cause of it with indifference. He begs leave to transcribe from his last articles with Mr. Sollee, a few passages, which he trusts will, of themselves, sufficiently explain his conduct.

They run thus:

"The said Sollee covenants and agrees with the said Chalmers, to grant him a benefit night on the last Wednesday of April, free from any expense; and in case the produce of the house should not amount to the sum of seven hundred and seventy-five dollars, the said Sollee does oblige himself to complete the sum above.

The said Sollee does oblige himself to pay besides to the said Chalmers, one hundred and sixty dollars, to be divided between the Benefit nights of the performers."

Mem. at the bottom of the article:

"P. S. I oblige myself to pay to Mr. Chalmers the one hundred and sixty dollars above mentioned by prorata of ten Benefit nights of the performers, that is sixteen dollars the day after every benefit."

Mr. Chalmers begs to observe that from the extreme disorder and misrule of the theatre, he offered some time back, to release Mr. Sollee from his engagement and to resign what was then due to him, and entreated him to suffer it to have an end. — This not being accepted, he at length was induced to exonerate Mr. Sollee, by taking what chance would produce on the 19th instant, which did not amount to quite 420 dollars.

Out of the 160 mentioned for the benefits, he has received no more than $104. Thus he relinquishes upwards of 400 dollars to which he was entitled, etc., etc.

Mr. Chalmers is charged with pride and self-interest. He trusts, he has, to his manifest loss, acquitted himself of the latter. To the former he transcribes with transport, what he hopes is only of that nature that will ever guide him to the paths of integrity and respectability.

Mr. Chalmers is under one obligation to the explanation given against him, as it offers him an opportunity of returning his acknowledgments to the inhabitants of Charleston, for the very respectable support he has met with, both in public and private.

This elicited from Mr. Sollee a reply:

Apr. 27 — 1796.

TO THE PUBLIC

Mr. Sollee is very sorry to be obliged to come forward to contradict the interpretation given by Mr. Chalmers relative to his articles with the proprietor of the City Theatre. The fact is that Mr. Chalmers was to perform about two and twenty nights, viz. ten for the Benefits of the performers [and consequently the twelve others for stock nights]. The performers who had benefits were to pay to Mr. Chalmers one hundred and sixty dollars. Mr. Sollee was bound to give him a free benefit (equivalent to two hundred

dollars) exclusive of his insuring to Mr. Chalmers that his second Benefit should be as good as the first, amounting to seven hundred and seventy five dollars.

Now it is asked of Mr. Chalmers when Mr. S. gave two hundred dollars for twelve nights, which amounts nearly to seventeen dollars per night, has not Mr. S. a right to give up as many stock nights as he pleased, and to increase the number of benefit nights?

As for the matter of exonerating the security due for the amount of his benefit night, Mr. Chalmers expected by the choice of "Fontaineville Forest" (the play he had taken at first) to bring a very full house; but if he was disappointed by the performers refusing to study for him, it is Mr. Chalmers's own fault, who had consistently refused to undertake any new parts, even for the Proprietor himself, which has been the cause of the Public having received the same plays repeatedly and it may be added that had Mr. Chalmers behaved with more cordiality and complacency, not only to his fellow performers, but to him also, who has so liberally rewarded him for his services, he never could, with propriety have complained of the extreme disorder and misrule of the theatre which was in a flourishing and orderly state before his admission.

The season was drawing to a close, and although Mr. Chalmers still remained in Charleston he took no further part in the performances. Mr. Turnbull's Interlude, produced for the first time in Charleston, was a military skit in which the author in the title-rôle was a Scotch Cobbler Turned Recruit.

Macready's comedy of "The Bank-Note," played for the first time in Charleston for Mr. Hipworth's benefit, had only recently made its appearance in America, having been produced in London the year before, 1795.

On April 28—Miss Wrighten's Benefit advertized: "Fontaineville Forest," which Mr. Chalmers had chosen and had had to relinquish for his benefit.

This note concerning it appeared in the *Gazette*:

Some well-wishers of Miss M. Wrighten, thinking her deserving of a good benefit, take the liberty of hinting to her that they think it will be much to her advantage if Mr. Chalmers does the part of *Lamotte*, and this he surely cannot refuse to do, as she exerted herself so much on both his nights.

He did refuse, and left Charleston soon after, with

much of the glory of his fine attainments dimmed by his unfortunate disposition.

A very disastrous and wide-spread fire occurred in Charleston on May 16, and its consequences were so poignantly felt that the rest of the theatrical season was entirely demoralized. A few scattered performances were given, but little notice was taken of them.

Some of the Charleston Papers preceding this date were lost, and the last theatre bill discovered prior to June 1 was one that seemed strangely prophetic in view of later events: "The Manager in Distress" and "The Doctor and Apothecary;" and on June 9, "Caravane du Caire" (Caravan of Cairo), by Gretry.

A very generous letter follows from the Proprietor of the Church-Street Theatre, Mr. Sollee.

CITY THEATRE

The late dreadful calamity which has befallen this city has induced the performers to relinquish one week's salary, by postponing the performances which were to have commenced last week. And they having besides determined to play the first-night for the benefit of the unfortunate sufferers without any pecuniary consideration, the proprietor hereby assures the public that he will not only lend the theatre, lighted for that night clear of charge, but will also give up for the relief of the distressed, the whole profits arising from the performances during the summer season, without any compensation for the house, the dresses or the scenery now on hand, and should the monies to be received prove insufficient to defray the other expenses accruing on any night of performance, the subscriber will himself supply all deficiencies.

This proposition is not the effect of ostentation, but a desire to induce the friends of the drama to support the theatre from benevolent motives.

The committee appointed for receiving the distributing donations, are invited to take this offer under their patronage, to nominate proper persons for door-keepers and for receiving the tickets and to give such directions as they may think proper.

June 22, 1796. John Sollee.

A General Communication of the Incorporated Grand Lodge of the State of South Carolina was advertized to be held in the Grand Lodge Room at Mrs.

Coats's on the Bay, on Friday the 24th of June, being the Festival of St. John the Baptist, precisely at ten o'clock in the morning whence the brethren were to walk in procession to the Presbyterian Church where a Charity sermon was to be heard by the Rev. Brother Buist, Grand Chaplain; Anthems and other Sacred music, in which Mrs. Pownall, the Misses Wrighten, Mr. Bergman, Mr. J. West, Mr. J. H. Harris, and others, having benevolently consented to give their assistance.

The Collection taken up at the Church doors was applied to "the Benefit of the Distressed Sufferers by the late dreadful conflagration."

The gloomy closing of the City Theatre under the management of Mr. Jones in the face of calamity, left, nevertheless, the comforting knowledge that during this season had been introduced to Charleston, the most distinguished Actor and Actress that had yet appeared in America.

PERFORMANCES OF THE FALL SEASON, 1795.

1795 Mr. Sollee's Co. at the City Theatre in Church St.

Nov. 10 — Every One has his Faults (Mrs. Inchbald) 1st performance here
Double Disguise, ...1st performance here
(Début of Miss C. Wrighten as "Miss Wooburn" and "Emily")

12 — The Dramatist
The Poor Soldier

14 — Such Things Are (Mrs. Inchbald)
The Romp

17 — Every One has his Faults (Mrs. Inchbald)
The Romp
(Miss M. Wrighten's début as "Priscilla Tomboy")

19 — The Jealous Wife (Colman)
Barnaby Brittle
(First appearance of Mr. Fawcett in Charleston from the New York Theatre)

21 — Love in a Village (Bickerstaff)
Miss in Her Teens

MRS. POWNALL, FORMERLY MRS. WRIGHTEN

Nov. 24 — The Jew
The Romp
26 — She Stoops to Conquer (Goldsmith)
28 — The Highland Reel
Bon Ton, ...1st performance here
Dec. 1 — The Jew
The Citizen
3 — Love in a Village (Bickerstaff)
Modern Antiques, or Merry Mourners
5 — The Castle of Andalusia
Barnaby Brittle
7 — The Castle of Andalusia
The Lying Valet
9 — The School for Scandal (R. B. Sheridan)
The Farmer
11 — Heigh-Ho for a Husband, ...1st performance here
The Midnight Hour
14 — Wild Oats (O'Keefe)
The Poor Soldier
18 — The Child of Nature
Catherine and Petruchio
21 — The Belle's Stratagem (Mrs. Cowley)
The Farmer
23 — Robin Hood (Opera)
All the World's a Stage
[Mr. Bergman made his first bow to an audience as an actor as *Edwin* in "Robin Hood"]
26 — George Barnwell
The True Born Irishman
28 — The Castle of Andalusia
(With new scenery, dresses and decoration)
Ways and Means
30 — Bold Stroke for a Wife
The Irish Fine Lady

1796

MR. SOLLEE'S COMPANY AT THE CITY THEATRE IN CHURCH STREET — WINTER AND SPRING SEASON, 1796.

Jan. 1 — Robin Hood
The King and the Miller of Mansfield
4 — Heigh-Ho for a Husband
The Purse, ...1st performance here
6 — The Suspicious Husband
[Ranger by Mr. Chalmers from the New Theatre Philadelphia being his first appearance here.]
The Quaker
9 — The Beaux' Stratagem
The Village Lawyer
11 — The Lyar
The True Born Irishman
14 — The West Indian
The Purse, or the American Tar
18 — Hamlet
The Quaker (Dibdin)

Jan. 20 — The Wonder
The Devil to Pay
22 — The Gamester
No Song, No Supper
23 — Love in a Village (Bickerstaff)
The Lying Valet
28 — The Jew
Double Disguise
30 — The Rage
(A new Comedy never performed here)
No Song, No Supper

Feb. 1 — The West Indian
The Lyar
3 — Douglas
The Farmer
5 — Hamlet
The Poor Soldier
8 — The Provoked Husband
The Virgin Unmasked
10 — The Busybody
Peeping Tom
12 — Romeo and Juliet
The Agreeable Surprize, ...Benefit, Mr. Jones
15 — Mountaineers (Colman), ...1st performance here
Barnaby Brittle
16 — The Young Quaker, ...Benefit of Mrs. Pownall
Rosina
17 — Hamlet
The Agreeable Surprize
18 — Mountaineers
Modern Antiques
19 — Dramatist
No Song, No Supper
(Mrs. Pownall to sing the Hunting Song, "Old Towler.")
20 — School for Scandal
Peeping Tom
22 — King Richard the Third
The Purse
26 — Robin Hood
Catherine and Petruchio

Feb. 27 — Mountaineers
Catherine and Petruchio
29 — The Suspicious Husband
Ways and Means

Mar. 2 — The Penitent
The Quaker
4 — "Above"
5 — Robin Hood
Love à la Mode
8 — Notoriety (A celebrated Comedy) with the original Epilogue, The Irishman in London, ...Benefit of Mr. Collins, 1st performance here

9 — Robin Hood
Love à la Mode
10 — Notoriety
The Poor Soldier
12 — The Orphan
The Deuce is in Him
15 — The Mountaineers
High Life below Stairs, ...Benefit of Mrs. Hellyer
17 — Macbeth
Children in the Wood, ...by request
(A new musical entertainment never performed here), ...Benefit, Mr. Jones
19 — The Lyar
Children in the Wood
("Children" Master Jones and a young Master of the City of Charleston, with a Dance in character.)
23 — Duenna
Love à la Mode, or the Humors of the Turf
28 — Every One has His Faults
Rosina
29 — Duenna
Love à la Mode
31 — The Natural Son (by R. Cumberland), ...1st time here
Interlude, Morning, Noon and Night
The Grand Masque of Comus, ...Benefit of Mr. Bartlett

Apr. 2 — The Road to Ruin (Holcroft)
Lanterna Magica
Two Strings to Your Bow, ...Benefit, Miss C. Wrighten
(Never performed in Charleston)
5 — A Bold Stroke for a Husband (Mrs. Cowley)
A True Born Irishman
The Standard of Liberty, ...Benefit, Mrs. Henderson
(A poetic tale)
7 — The Recruiting Officer
The Irish Taylor, or the Humours of the Thimble, ...1st time here
Miss in Her Teens, ...Benefit, Mr. Collins
9 — The Critic (R. B. Sheridan)
The Children of the Wood
The Apprentice (1st time here), ...Benefit, Mr. Fawcett
12 — The West Indian
Midas, ...Benefit, Mr. and Mrs. Turnbull
14 — She Stoops to Conquer (Goldsmith), by particular desire
Captain O'Blunder, or the Brave Irishman, 1st time here
Benefit, Mr. Patterson
(Tickets to be had of Mr. Patterson at the sign of the Grand Master, King Street.)
16 — Richard the Third
Apotheosis of Franklin — Pantomime by Mons. Audin
Never performed anywhere before, Benefit, Mr. Audin, Jun.

Apr. 19 — Dramatist
Readings by Mr. Chalmers
The Critic
Lanterna Magica, ...Benefit, Mr. Chalmers
22 — King Richard III
An Ode written by a gentleman of this city to be spoken by Miss C. Wrighten. Grand Allegorical Pantomime, written and arranged by M. Audin Jun., called Apotheosis of Franklin, ...Benefit, Mons. Audin, Jun.
23 — The Son-in-Law
Judgment of Midas
Chrononhotonthologos, Benefit, Messrs. Watts and Heeley
26 — Chapter of Accidents
Doctor and Apothecary, ...(Never performed here)
Music selected by Storace, the orchestra accompaniments composed by Mr. Bergman.
29 — Fontaineville Forest (James Borden), Benefit, Miss M. Wrighten, First time here
The Apotheosis, or Deifying of Franklin, by permission of M. Audin, ...Benefit, Mr. Bergman
30 — The Manager in Distress (A Prelude), Never performed here
My Grandmother (A new musical entertainment)
The Gentle Shepherd, ..Never performed in Charleston
Allan Ramsay's celebrated Scotch Pastoral, ...
.....Never performed here
To conclude with a Brilliant Display of Fireworks,..
.....Benefit, Brother Henderson
Under the Sanction and Patronage of the Right Worshipful Grand Lodge of South Carolina Ancient York Masons
May 3 — The Manager in Distress
Inkle and Yarico
The Doctor and Apothecary.

CHAPTER XIII

The Charleston Theatre
Under Mr. West — Season 1796

First American Presentation of the Pantomime
"Echo and Narcissus," by Madame Placide.
"The Maid of Orleans," Arranged by Mons. Placide.
The New Song, "Yankee Doodle."

CHAPTER XIII

To Mr. Thomas Wade West, head of the firm of West and Bignall, this city was indebted more than to any other for its handsomest eighteenth century play-house, and for a generous, high-toned and gentlemanly conduct of its affairs during the entire period of his management. He was justly very popular with the city government and all the people, and his house made handsome yearly donations to needy municipal objects, notably the Charleston Orphan House and the sufferers by disastrous fires; and through his magnanimity to the French refugees from Santo Domingo, who inaugurated the French Play-house, his own theatrical business was seriously damaged.

Mr. West came to America late in the year 1791, having played at Bath and Bristol. His managerial abilities and stage career were developed after he came to this country, and while playing with the Old American Company in New York. The descriptions of him showed a handsome face and figure, a debonair mien, and something of the dandy in his dress. Soon after his arrival in New York, he was nick-named "the leather-breeches beau," because, having obtained six pairs of leather breeches, he found himself unable to pay for them and was arrested for debt.[1] "Old Hugh Gaines," however, went his bail, and amused all the bystanders by exclaiming, "Six Pairs of Leather Breeches! How many legs has the fellow got?" Mr. West usually appeared in the street in boots and leather breeches, always new, and with three gold-laced buttonholes on

[1] "History of the American Theatre" — G. O. Seilhamer.

each side of the high upright collar of his scarlet coat. His American début was in New York as *Leander* in "The Padlock," in 1792.

For the Charleston Season of 1796, Mr. West brought a good company to the Charleston Theatre, the cast including: Messrs. Hipworth, Edgar, J. West, Nelson, Sully, Sr., T. West, J. Bignall, Kedey, Jones, Copeland, and Miller; and the French actors Placide, Douvilliers, Lavalette, Latté, and Master Duport; and Mrs. West, Mrs. Miller, Mrs. Kedey, Mrs. Decker, Mrs. Edgar, Madame Placide, and Mlle. Duthé.

Unsettled conditions in a community make managers reluctant to enter it, and, although advertizing that he would start the winter season in January, Mr. West and his company, who had been playing a fall engagement in Norfolk, did not arrive in Charleston until February, and, on the opening of The Charleston Theatre, the City Theatre began its benefits.

There were many changes in the company since the last season: Mrs. Bignall was no longer in the partnership or company; Mr. J. Kenna had died in Norfolk; Mr. and Mrs. Chambers and Miss Sully had gone to the American Company in New York, as had Mrs. Val and Mrs. Pick; and Mr. and Mrs. Graupner and Mrs. Villiers had gone to the Boston Theatre. Many of the French performers were engaged by the Old American Company to start a spring engagement in March, and, headed by Mr. Francisqui, gave the same pantomimes and ballets and *divertissements* in New York and Philadelphia that they had previously given in Charleston. Mrs. Belzon (née Sully) is lost to sight, and it is probable that she had retired from the stage.

Mr. Hipworth had been engaged by Mr. Sollee at the City Theatre for the lead in high-comedy, but when he found that he was to play second-fiddle to Mr. Chalmers he came over to the Charleston, and on its opening night took the part of *Jaffier* in "Venice Preserved."

Mr. West's company numbered twenty-four. They soon got into harness and were in fine trim for the opening evening, and had gorgeous new costumes for "The Sultan, or a Peep into the Seraglio." This colorful farce gave the Eastern Potentate and the ladies of his palace an unusual opportunity to dazzle the beholders with their graceful Oriental draperies and gold and silver-spangled veils, with bright eyes peeping through; and the Sultan's imposing turban gave the ladies in the audience a hint as to how to wind theirs.

"Venice Preserved" and "The Sultan," brought forward two great favorites, and the former was declared to be one of the noblest tragedies "from the time of Charles I to the present day."

Mr. Hipworth had been in America a little over a year, having come from England to accept an engagement with the Boston Theatre. He was said to be possessed of more than ordinary talent as an actor. Mr. West had made a fine selection of the best old English plays, many of which had been seen in past seasons, but old favorites were constantly requested. Shakspeare's plays, and The Orphan, The Recruiting Officer, Jane Shore, School for Scandal, and many others, seemed imbued with perennial freshness and the audiences welcomed old friends and old jokes with hearty indulgence, some even declaring that the foreknowledge

one enjoys when witnessing a well-known play adds zest to one's pleasure.

Some of the most important offerings for this season were — Venice Preserved, She Stoops to Conquer, King Richard the Third, The Earl of Warwick or Margaret of Anjou, La Forêt Noire, Henry the Fourth, As You Like It, Othello, Fontainebleau, Alexander the Great, The Grecian Daughter, The Gamester, Love Makes the Man, The Maid of Orleans, The Surrender of Calais, The Contrast, or American Son of Liberty, Richard the First, The Rivals, and The Bank Note.

The dressing of Charleston audiences has been described as elegant and distinguished, and as the *Columbian Herald* was reporting the Court costumes from English fashion magazines, no doubt the ladies here took many little cues in enhancing the charms of their own raiment from this unimpeachable source; and "Honored Reader" may here have a peep at the Queen's Birthday Drawing-Room in 1796, which was a bower of brilliant colors and Oriental splendor, judging from the dresses of the guests; and mention is made that Queen Charlotte's royal daughters were trained in embroidery and needle work, as was shown in their Court dresses:

The Princess Royal was most elegantly dressed in a crêpe embroidery of her own workmanship, and which in point of beauty, could not be excelled. The embroidery was a gold and purple foil ornamented with rich frivolité, over which was a drapery drawn up with gold cord and tassels. Round the bottom of the petticoat was a worked border of white satin embroidered with colored silks and trimmed with fringe. Her Royal Highness's head-dress was a white satin turban-cap with white feathers ornamented with diamonds and purple stones.

The Princess Augusta wore a crêpe petticoat embroidered with green and gold in stripes and a border of black velvet and white satin in Vandyke; the body and train of Turkish silk.

The Duchess of York was dressed in an embroidery of her own workmanship. The petticoat was of crêpe embroidered with stars, white satin and gold and trimmed with sable. The body and train

were of rich gold tissue being a present from the Turkish Ambassador to her Royal Highness on his first arrival in England.

The military dress, showing the complexion of the times, prevailed most among the gentlemen.

The ever-alert and enterprising French members of the company could always be depended upon to dance themselves into immediate popularity, and they worked their inventive genius over-time to bring out old favorites in new guises, so that repetition should not stale their wares. So, preceding their first presentation this season of "La Forêt Noire," was announced a "Sylvan Dance," with exquisite costumes for this most poetic of Terpsichorean diversions; the dancers being Mons. and Mme. Placide, Mons. Douvilliers and Mlle. Duthé, and Messieurs Lavallette, Latté, and Duport.

"La Forêt Noire" was mentioned as "one of the most popular Ballets of the day; as performed upward of one hundred nights at the Opera House and Theatre Royal, Covent Garden, London, and twenty successive nights at the Theatre Philadelphia." After the furore made in Paris and London by Mlle. Sallé in 1734, opera composers introduced the dance as one of the most desired accessories to their compositions. Mr. Vestris of London, who styled himself *le dieu de danse,* made himself the idol of the people in the poetry of motion of his famous "Chaconnes;" and besides this the gods had dowered him with a beautiful face and a perfect taste in dress. No wonder he was adored.

May 9, 1796 — On this date was advertized the elaborate bill for Madame Placide's Benefit, beginning with "The Belle's Stratagem," with a Grand Masquerade Scene for the 4th Act arranged by Mons. Placide followed by a *Minuet de La Cour* and *Gavotte,* and con-

cluding with a New Pastoral and Speaking Pantomime, in 3 acts, composed by Madame Placide called "Echo and Narcissus, or the Levée of Cupid."

Madame Placide has the honor of informing the Ladies and Gentlemen of the city that nothing has been neglected either in the incidents of the piece, or the dresses, or the decorations, painted by Mons. Audin, to render this Pantomime one of the most interesting and entertaining that has yet been exhibited in the United States, etc.

The Cast follows:

"Echo and Narcissus"

Venus, ...Mrs. Decker
The Three Graces, ...Mrs. J. West, Miss West, Miss Duthé
Nymphs, ...Mrs. Kedey, Mrs. Gray
Nemesis, Goddess of Revenge, ...Mrs. Edgar
Echo, Daughter of Air and Earth, ...Madam Placide
Narcissus, the Shepherd, ...Mons. Douvilliers
Hunters, ...Messrs. Copeland, Jones, Kedey, Sully
Furies, ...Mons. Placide, Mr. J. West, and Mons. Latté
Thyrsis, a Shepherd, ...Master Duport
Cupid, ...A Young Master of this City

The piece will conclude with dances by Madame Placide, Miss Duthé, Master Duport and Cupid. The present Band will be assisted by a large number of musicians which will add greatly to the elegance of the Pantomime.

Mr. Edgar, as "Captain Absolute" in his benefit performance of "The Rivals," received next day a very laudatory criticism; and Mrs. Edgar's benefit showed for the first time here Schiller's tragedy, "The Robbers," of which the bill said: "The greatness of the design, the grandeur of the hero, the ferocity and determined resolution of the band of robbers, the magnificent terror of its several situations; the grief of the indulgent father, the unparalleled hatred of *Charles de Moor* and the sufferings and tragical end of *Amelia,* render it one of the most interesting Dramatic productions ever exhibited on any stage either in ancient or modern times."

A synopsis was given of the entirely new pantomime, "Death of Major André," which concluded the bill.

The pieces that had their first-nights here this season, besides those mentioned, were the following:

Earl of Warwick, ...by Franklin
Perplexities, ...Pantomime
All in Good Humour, ...
Wheel of Fortune, ...Cumberland
Maid of Orleans, ...Pantomime
Haunted Tower, ...by Cobb
Siege of Damascus, ...by John Hughes
World in a Village, ...by O'Keefe
Hartford Bridge, ...
Ladies' Frolic, ...
Chinese Shades, ...
Bank Note, ...

The Rejected Fool, Yankee Doodle, and a number of new songs.

Apropos of Mons. Placide's Benefit: "The Public are respectfully informed that the Grand French Pantomime of 'The Maid of Orleans, or Joan of Arc,' is now in rehearsal and will be brought forward with all expedition under the direction of Mr. Placide. The well-known story of the Maid of Orleans, the Saviour of her country, had long been held in the highest estimation in the theatres of Paris," etc. "The Manager, conscious of the respectability of the above-mentioned Pantomime, intends offering it for the First Time to an American Audience, thoroughly persuaded of its meeting their approbative support."

The day of its performance the most elaborate description was given of every act and scene, stating that the whole of the scenery was painted by Mons. Audin.

Alexander Placide was a most assiduous and resourceful worker, not only in his own original lines of Fancy Dancing of all kinds, but as a Pantomimist and Fencer of distinction. He was keen to be the first to introduce new steps and forms, and his ambition and willingness to work overtime led to his original arrangement of many European pantomimes being given

to Charleston audiences before they were shown elsewhere in America. He and Mr. Audin, the scene-painter, collaborated in the amazingly elaborate productions given on this stage, and they both loved pageantry, glitter, gorgeous costumes, great processions, and lighting and mechanical effects of all descriptions, all of which called for ingenuity and hard work to evolve and materialize such results as they achieved. Alexander Placide arranged and probably taught all the dances and must undoubtedly have been the most highly paid member of the company. A resourceful Pantomimist and good dancer was a power in the theatre and always ranked high on the pay-roll; and it was said that at Drury Lane, Booth, Cibber, Wilkes, and Mrs. Oldfield could draw but 500 pounds a week, in legitimate drama, but the genius of fun and nonsense could double the receipts as the prices were always raised on Pantomime evenings.

In their quest for novelty the old amusement vendors resorted to weird and oft uncanny tricks, and when a piece had run the even tenor of its way for a respectable length of time, it was served up with such additions and "emendations" as to have little resemblance to its original form. Thus the main attraction for Mrs. Decker's benefit was "Robinson Crusoe, or Harlequin Friday," "who after the *Horrid* ceremony of his intended death, and its prevention by Robinson Crusoe, concluded with his whimsical transformation to Harlequin, sailing off in a flower-wreathed boat with Columbine!"

Harlequin was not merely an acrobat in these early performances, but had a speaking part as an impromptu

wit, and "got off" all the local gags and *bon-mots,* which no doubt Mrs. Decker had been seduously collecting for some time, and the Pantomime Director usually saw that the fantastic, poetic, humorous, and grotesque were combined in equal degree.

The benefit for the Charleston Orphans was omitted this year as the Fire-Sufferers were deemed much more needy, and it was said that the "Infant Sons and Daughters of Affliction, poverty and distress," gladly gave way to them.

The Charleston Theatre, as was its custom, remained closed during Passion week, but the City Theatre kept open and played to large audiences.

Mr. West's Company continued through June 1st, having given thirty-five performances, with three pieces each evening, interspersed with songs and dances. They introduced fifteen new plays to this city, and he and his company gave great pleasure and perfect satisfaction, but there was still unrest in the air.

The French Players, from the day of their arrival in Charleston, had worked unceasingly, each in his own line as Proprietor, Manager, Actor, Painter, Mechanician, and Musician, to acquire a strong foot-hold in this community, which they recognized as artistic, musical, cultured, and appreciative, and they desired this city as a permanent home. They succeeded so well that two years after their first theatrical and musical enterprise, they began to run competitors out of the field.

John Sollee's successful season just closed, during which he assembled here the most brilliant theatrical material yet brought to this city, caused the waning of the popularity that the Charleston Theatre up to this

time had enjoyed, and during the season of 1797-8 most of Mr. West's company went over to the French in the City Theatre, which in the preceding year had been enlarged and much improved.

CHARLESTON THEATRE—SEASON 1796

1796

Feb. 15 — Venice Preserved
The Sultan

16 — Inkle and Yarico
The Brother Quakers
Citizen

17 — She Stoops to Conquer
The Quaker

18 — (By desire of the Gentlemen of the Jockey Club)
The Clandestine Marriage
The Romp

19 — King Richard the Third
Old Soldier
The Sultan

20 — The Wonder
The Spoiled Child

22 — Highland Reel
The Spoiled Child

24 — Cymon and Sylvia
La Forêt Noire

26 — The Earl of Warwick, or Margaret of Anjou (first performance here)
Don Juan

29 — The Suspicious Husband
The Prize

Mar. 2 — Fontainebleau
An Honest Yorkshireman

5 — Henry IV
The Wood-cutters

9 — Love in a Forest, or As You Like It
Mirza and Lindor
(New scenery and decorations got up under the direction of Mons. Placide)

11 — Othello
The Grand Pantomime of the Death of Captain Cook

12 — Fontainebleau
The Perplexities (A farce performed here for the first time)

15 — Alexander the Great
All in Good Humor, (Drama in one act, 1st time here)
The Rejected Fool (New Pantomime-Ballet)

MR. VESTRIS
(BY GAINSBOROUGH)

T. W. WEST—SEASON 1796

Mar. 18 — (On account of Passion week the last night of performance till Easter Monday)
The Wheel of Fortune (first time here)
Don Juan
28 — The Russian Slaves
Jupiter and Europa
30 — The Grecian Daughter
Death of Captain Cook

Apr. 1 — Historical Play — Columbus, or America Discovered
Three Weeks after Marriage
4 — Columbus
Jupiter and Europa
6 — Love Makes the Man, (Colley Cibber)
The Devil Upon Two Sticks
8 — The Gamester
The Maid of Orleans, or Joan of Arc, (First time here)
11 — The Haunted Tower, or Baron of Oakland, (First time here)
Joan of Arc, or Maid of Orleans
13 — The Surrender of Calais
Three Weeks after Marriage
The Ballet to conclude with the new Country Dance "Yankee Doodle"
15 — The Battle of Hexham
Maid of Orleans
18 — The Contrast, or American Son of Liberty
Richard the First, (For the first time)
25 — The Siege of Damascus by John Hughes, (first time here)
Three Weeks after Marriage, (Benefit Mr. Edgar)

May 2 — World in a Village, (O'Keefe) (Never performed here)
New French Ballet, (Never performed here)
French Vauxhall Gardens
Hartford Bridge, or Skirts of a Camp, (Never performed here), Benefit Mrs. J. West
4 — The Rivals
Robinson Crusoe, or Harlequin Friday — Benefit Mrs. Decker
11 — The Robbers, (Schiller) (First time here)
Death of Major André, (First time here)
25 — The Ladies' Frolic, or Beggar's Opera Reversed
Maid of the Oaks
The Chinese Shades, or Art of Magic, (First time here)
Benefit Mr. J. West
27 — Bank Note, (Never performed here)
The Prize, Benefit Mr. Hipworth

June 1 — Ladies' Frolic, or Beggar's Opera Reversed, (First time here)
Maid of the Oaks
The Chinese Shades, (Never performed here), Benefit Mr. J. West

CHAPTER XIV

Midsummer Season at the City Theatre — 1796 — Under Mr. Godwin, who built Harmony Hall.

The Marriage of Charlotte Wrighten to Alexander Placide.

The Tragic Deaths of Mrs. Pownall and Mary Wrighten

Mr. Godwin's Last Performances.

CHAPTER XIV

Starting in benevolence, under lowering skies, continuing through difficulties, and ending in tragedy, was the epitome of this brief season.

Calamity draws people together to work for a common cause, and all classes of people in the city of Charleston were working for the alleviation of the suffering caused by the recent fire.

With the consent of Mr. Sollee the City Theatre was opened by Mr. Godwin, who built Harmony Hall in 1786, and he invited the actors and actresses from both theatres still left in the city to form themselves into a company under his management, and to give their first performance for the fire-sufferers. This brought together a dozen players, and all antagonisms that had existed between the members of the two theatres were forgotten, and they united their efforts for the performances proposed.

Mr. Godwin, who was very much attached to this city, had returned here for a brief visit, and this opportunity for service as he deemed it was seized upon to bring to light again some of his best rôles in his most familiar plays—to help the fire-sufferers, the actors and actresses whose full season had been curtailed, and incidentally to help himself.

CITY THEATRE, CHURCH STREET.

For the relief of the sufferers by the late fire.
This Evening
June 28, 1796.
Will be Presented
Not performed here these ten years, Fielding's celebrated Comedy called

"The Miser"
Reduced to Three Acts.

Lovegold, (the Miser), ...Mr. Godwin
(Being his first appearance here these ten year.)
Frederick, ...Mr. J. West
(the Charleston. Being his first appearance on this stage.)
Clermont, ...Mr. Collins
Ramilie, ...Mr. Nelson
(the Charleston. Being his first appearance on this stage.)
Decoy, ...Mr. Sully
Sattin, ...Mr. Duport
(the Charleston)
James, ...Mr. J. Jones
(the Charleston. Being his first appearance on this stage.)
Mariana, ...Mrs. J. West
(the Charleston. Being his first appearance on this stage.)
Harriet, ...Miss C. Wrighten
Wheedle, ...Mrs. Miller
Lappet, ...Mrs. Pownall

Preceding the Play
An Occasional Address by — Mrs. Pownall
On the late Conflagration.

Between the Play and Entertainment — An Address by Mr. Godwin, Relative to his performing in this city several years past, with a Humorous description of Certain Cities.

The Characters of The Fine Gentleman, Old Citizen, Irishman, and Scotchman; to which will be added the Pantomime of "The Old Soldier, or the Two Thieves."

"Two Thieves"
Under the direction of Monsieur Placide.

Old Soldier, ...Mons. Placide
Clown, ...Mr. Sully
Father, ...Mr. J. Jones
The Two Thieves, ...Messrs. Latté ————?
Lucas, ...Mons. Lavalette
Milk Maid, ...Miss M. Wrighten
Margot, Mother to Collette, ...Mrs. Miller
And Collette, ...Madame Placide

In the course of the Pantomime
The Pas-Seul
By Master Duport

And a fight with pistols and broad-swords by the Old Soldier and the Two Thieves.

Mr. Jones respectfully informs the Ladies and Gentlemen of Charleston that in consequence of the frequent complaints of theatrical performances not beginning at the prefixed time, that the curtain positively will be raised at the hour herein mentioned; the entertainments to terminate at a seasonable hour so as not to derange the regularity of families. Doors to be opened at seven and the curtain to rise positively at Eight o'clock. Tickets to be had at the office of the Theatre only.

Boxes 5s. Pitt 4s. Gallery 2s. 4d.

Although started with the best intentions, these performances led up to a double tragedy through the introduction of the charming young Charlotte Wrighten to Alexander Placide and their association in the plays.

He was an exquisite dancer and had a sprightly wit, and if he looked anything like Mr. Vestris, to whom in England he had been compared, he must have been a most intriguing person, and he no doubt had French daintiness in his dress and manners, and pleased in spite of his morals. Although arriving in Charleston alone in 1791 and soon afterwards going North, he returned in 1794 for the opening of the French Theatre, as its Manager, and "Madame" Placide soon joined him, and had been playing with him ever since, even at the opening of this season, playing *Collette* in "The Old Soldier," on June 28, and dancing in the Vauxhall Gardens. After these performances she was never again heard of, so far as the writer knows, and probably returned to France; so the inference that she was only "Madame" by courtesy is strengthened by the following notice: "Married: On Monday forenoon, August 1st, by the Rev. Mr. Coste, M. Alexander Placide to Miss Charlotte Sophia Wrighten."[1]

On August 2 appeared Mrs. Pownall's notice that she would be unable to fill her engagement in the Concert advertized for August 6 "on account of an unnatural change in her family." The sudden shock of her young daughter's marriage to a supposedly married man, completely prostrated the mother, who was unable to recover from it, and she died of a broken heart, twelve

[1] South Carolina *State Gazette*, and Timothy and Masons' Daily *Advertiser*, August 3, 1796.

days after the elopement. Her funeral notice was in the *Gazette* of Saturday, August 13, 1796.

"Died: Yesterday morning, Mrs. Mary Ann Pownall, formerly of the Church-Street Theatre, aged 40 years."

The disconsolate Mary Wrighten, bereft of her mother and twin sister, in a strange land, succumbed, and pined away twelve days after her mother's death:

"Died On Wednesday morning, the 24th instant, Miss Mary Wrighten, daughter of the late Mrs. Mary Ann Pownall, formerly of the Church-Street Theatre."

Mrs. Pownall and Mary and Charlotte had played for the last time together in the comic opera "Inkle and Yarico" on July 12.

Mr. and Mrs. Pownall and the latter's daughters and a little son Felix, four years old, all came here together to join Mr. Sollee's company, and on April 16 a little daughter was born to Mrs. Pownall. Mr. Pownall appeared in only one of the casts, no doubt as an emergency actor to help out his step-daughter, Mary, on the evening of her benefit, appearing as *Harry Dornton,* in "The Road to Ruin."

It had been advertized that, after the Concert referred to, Mrs. Pownall and family would return to England. This no doubt hastened the marriage and brought about the dénouement.

All these sad things happened before publicity was given to peoples' private affairs through the press, so there was no way of finding out what became of "Madame" Placide, nor of Mr. Pownall, little Felix, and the baby; nor of the remorse of the young Charlotte, nor how soon she was able to forget the family trage-

dies, in learning the intricacies of fancy-dances. But it is written of Charlotte's later career, that she became a distinguished actress and the mother of a family of noted players who made their home in Charleston; and she lived down the reproach she had brought upon herself by her otherwise exemplary character.

The performances by Mr. Godwin at this time were his last public appearances, after which he retired to private life.

MIDSUMMER SEASON AT THE CITY THEATRE, 1796.

The plays included in this brief season were:

1796

June 28 — The Miser, ...Mr. Godwin
Occasional Address, ...Mrs. Pownall
Pantomime, Old Soldier, ...Directed by Mons. Placide
30 — Miller of Mansfield
Farmer
Laborer's Return

July 2 — Farmer
American Heroine
4 — Poor Soldier
Apotheosis of Franklin
9 — Duenna
French Vauxhall Gardens
12 — Inkle and Yarico
French Vauxhall Gardens.

CHAPTER XV

Mr. Sollee's Company at the City Theatre, 1797, Introducing Mr. and Mrs. Whitlock.

Mr. Placide prominent as Ballet and Pantomime Director.

Original Arrangement of "Alcesta, or the Force of Love and Friendship," by Mr. Placide.

The Man of the Times, or Scarcity of Cash, by Mr. Beete of the City Theatre.

Local Skit, Jacob Gawky's Ramble from Boston to Charleston, by Mr. Jones.

New Music and Accompaniments to the Sicilian Romance, by Monsieur Daguetty.

New Song, introduced in the Sicilian Romance, by a Young Lady of this City.

The Princess of Babylon, played for the first time in America, Arranged by Monsieur Lavalette.

CHAPTER XV

The City *Gazette,* January 2, 1797, states that: "The Harbor Master reported sixty-seven square rigged vessels, eighty-four schooners, and sixteen sloops riding at anchor; and one month later, ninety-one square-rigged vessels and fifty-eight schooners and sloops."

The wholesale store of Whitefield and Brown was doing a thriving business in Bedon's Alley; large warehouses were being erected for cotton, which had become the great staple of export, and extensive yards were established in upper King Street for the accommodation of the wagons in which it was brought to the city. So the actors, arriving in sloop or brigantine, found a crowded port and a busy little metropolis.

The epoch 1792-98 was remarkable for theatrical activity in the South, and especially in Charleston where all the best actors, singers, and musicians were engaged for long seasons, and two theatres were running continuously.

The most distinguished artists in America were giving here first-nights of new plays, and first-performances by many of the finest players; and many Charleston citizens were shining in their reflected light through the willingness of the actors to include, during their regular engagements, local plays, pantomimes, occasional addresses, and original songs and music.

The first mention made of the new players appeared in the City *Gazette,* January 5, 1797, giving a partial list of those expected. The company seems to have been gathered from many sources, the chief actress being Mrs. Whitlock, a sister of Mrs. Siddons.

Young Mrs. Placide had spent a busy summer season fitting herself for more ambitious rôles, and had proved an apt pupil under her husband's instructions in dancing. They both were in this company, and during the season she took all the dancing parts formerly assigned to "Madame" Placide, and many prominent characters in singing and acting, to both of which she was born. Up to this season, it had been *"Mons."* Placide, but now and ever after, in association with his young English wife, they became "Mr. and Mrs. Placide." Mr. West's son and daughter-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. J. West, had also come over from the Charleston Theatre.

The first cast will show the new members. After a complimentary reference to Mrs. Whitlock the *Gazette* continues: "This judicious choice of 'The Grecian Daughter' for the opening of the theatre together with the circumstance of so many new performers to make their début, many of whom have much more than ordinary merit, etc., assures a successful season."

THE FIRST PERFORMANCE OF THE SEASON, CITY THEATRE.

This Evening will be presented the Tragedy of "The Grecian Daughter."

Evander, ...Mr. Whitlock

From the Philadelphia Theatre, being his first appearance on this Stage.

Philotas, ...Mr. West
Melanthon, ...Mr. Beete

From the Boston Theatre, being his first appearance on this Stage.

Phocian, ...Mr. Radcliffe

Being his first appearance on this Stage.

Arcas, ...Mr. J. Jones
Calippus, ...Mr. Helmbold

Being his second appearance on any Stage.

Greek Herald, ...Mr. Lewis
Perdiccas, ...Mr. Lavalette
Officer, ...Mr. Latté
Dionisius, ...Mr. Ashton

From the Theatre of New York and Boston, being his first appearance on this Stage.
Euphrasia, the Grecian Daughter, ...Mrs. Whitlock
From the Philadelphia Theatre, being her first appearance on this Stage.
Erixene, ...Miss Chaucer

Being her first appearance on this Stage.
To which will be added a Farce never performed here, called
"The First Floor, or
The Macaroni Pastry Cook."

Old Whimsey, ...Mr. Beete
Young Whimsey, ...Mr. West
Furnish, ...Mr. Ashton
Monford, ...Mr. Radcliffe
Landlord, ...Mr. Lewis
Simon, ...Mr. J. Jones
Frank, ...Mr. Helmbold
Timtartlet, the Macaroni Pastry Cook, ...Mr. Jones
Mrs. Pattypan, ...Mrs. Ashton

Being her first appearance on this Stage.
Nancy, ...Miss Chaucer
Charlotte, ...Mrs. Placide

Doors to be opened at half-past Five and to begin positively at half-past Six o'clock. Places in the Boxes may be taken at the Box-Office as usual.

Box 5s. Pit 4s. Gallery 2s. 4d.
January 6, 1797.

FROM A CORRESPONDENT.

The abilities of Mrs. Whitlock must insure to the proprietor of the theatre very handsome profits. Who can behold the action of Mrs. Whitlock and not admire her? And who can listen to her delivery and not feel its force? In the "Grecian Daughter" every heart of sensibility sympathizes with her in her supposed distress and acknowledges her amazing powers, both by the falling tear and repeated bursts of applause.

In the "Carmelite," she is inimitable, and as a truth it cannot be denied, that her sister, Mrs. Siddons, may *equal* but *cannot excel* Mrs. Whitlock in tragedy.

The countenance of this lady is inexpressibly sweet, to which is added the most mild and dignified manners. When she displays the look of affection, the heart is feelingly touched; but when pale horror and despair are portrayed in her face, it is then that the heart by unusual palpitations, acknowledges her unrivalled power over it.

Mrs. Whitlock's merit has called forth this weak, although just tribute of praise from one of her admirers.

Mr. and Mrs. Whitlock were among the noteworthy recruits brought from England to the American stage

by Mr. Wignell. Charles Whitlock was a provincial actor and manager in England at the Newcastle Theatre as the associate of Munden. As an actor it was said he was at his best in the "heavy feathers," *Lord Morland* in "Every One Has His Faults" being considered his best part.

Mrs. Whitlock was Elizabeth Kemble, Mrs. Siddons' youngest sister, and had with the other members of the Kemble family her theatrical education in the provinces.

In the summer of 1784 Elizabeth Kemble was at Lancaster, England, where she met and married Charles Whitlock, in June, 1785. Mr. Whitlock was then one of the managers of the Chester Theatre, and his wife became the chief attraction of the Newcastle circuit. The Whitlocks were held in high esteem, and at the close of their 1791 engagement they were presented with a purse of gold.

In 1792 Mrs. Whitlock was at the Haymarket in London, and she and her husband were engaged for the Edinburgh and Glasgow Theatres for the season of 1792-3.

They were a very popular couple and were spoken of as exceedingly amiable and worthy persons. On February 17, 1794, the New Theatre in Philadelphia was opened and on the 18th, Mr. and Mrs. Whitlock first appeared before an American audience, and in the criticisms following Mrs. Whitlock was acclaimed as the first actress of America, and one of the first American *Stars.*

Mrs. Placide's ability was accorded early recognition, as she had second place to Mrs. Whitlock, as *Lady Grace* in the comedy of "The Provoked Husband," on

the second evening; was in the lead in the musical farce as *Laura* in "The Agreeable Surprise" and as *Collette,* opposite her husband as *Lubin,* in "The Bird Catcher;" being her first appearance in dancing, and concluding with an "Allemande by Mr. and Mrs. Placide." She was the cynosure of all eyes, and Mr. and Mrs. Whitlock in legitimate drama were close pressed by Mr. and Mrs. Placide in the ballet-operas and pantomimes.

Mr. Jones was accorded first place in "comic powers" and always brought down the house as *Barnaby Brittle* with the song: "Zooks! That an Old Man can't have a Chicken." Young Mrs. West played ingénue parts delightfully and was also becoming a very graceful dancer.

Many criticisms were appearing similar in tone to those that have already been noted concerning a repetition of the old plays.

One of Charleston's earliest theatrical heart-throbs was the ever-popular tragedy of "Douglas," which at its first performance scored an immediate success. It was repeated early this season with Mr. Jones as *Young Norval,* Mr. Whitlock, *Old Norval,* and Mrs. Whitlock, *Lady Randolph,* which character had been one of the favorites of her sister, Mrs. Siddons.

In "She Stoops to Conquer," January 27, Mr. Jones, the inimitable, played *Tony Lumpkin* to everybody's satisfaction, and Mrs. Whitlock as the heroine "delighted every eye as well as ear in moulding herself into the form and fashion of *Miss Hardcastle.*"

The celebrated tragedy of Congreve's, "Mourning Bride," which is said to have been the pattern for all dramatic writers in the tragic line for many years,

showed Mrs. Whitlock "piercing all hearts capable of refined sensibility as *Zara.*"

The City Theatre was crowded with "a polite audience" on the first of February to enjoy Mrs. Whitlock as *Rosalind* in "As You Like It," her first Shakspearian rôle played here. "She came fully up to all expectations and was Mistress of all passions and emotions," etc.

In the farce, "Maid of the Oaks," as *Lady Bab Lardoon,* Mrs. Whitlock pleased equally well in comedy or tragedy; and it was said of her during her first season in America that she could assume with equal grace, ease and propriety, "the airs of a country minx, the rudeness of a bad boy or the tenderness of a Juliet."

These criticisms are sufficient to show Charleston's appreciation of this notable actress.

Mrs. Placide was given second place in the comedies and tragedies, being next to Mrs. Whitlock, and first place in the operas, pantomimes and dances. This was a remarkable record for a young actress, about twenty-one years of age, who had acquired most of this proficiency in less than two years, in the early part of which she must have suffered much anguish of mind in realizing that her hasty marriage had caused the death of both her mother and sister. No doubt her equilibrium was more quickly restored because of the ambition and assiduous work of her husband to push her just as soon as possible in the forefront of everything; and she responded to the urge, and, with her youth and beauty and lovely voice which had been cultivated by her mother, and her aptitude in mastering intricate and graceful dances, she merited her advancement.

In the jolly pantomime, "The Old Grow Young, or the Power of Cupid," Mr. and Mrs. Placide led; a *Pas-Seul* was given by Miss Duthé, and a *Pas-Seul* by Mrs. Placide was followed by a *Pas-de-Deux* by Mr. and Mrs. Placide, all joining in conclusion in a lovely Country Dance.

Writing of these things makes one long to exchange some of the dreary stuff offered these days as *divertissement* at vaudeville or moving-picture show, for just such lovely, gracious exercises of powers of motion, or even some of the early displays of Mystery and Magic for the special delectation of the juniors.

The only attention paid the Jockey Club this season, besides running every night, was "Love à La Mode, or Humours of the Turf," played at Mr. Whitlock's Benefit. Plays "By desire of the Jockey Club" seem to have been entirely omitted. However, this yearly week of gaiety always brought forth unusually alluring advertisements, and "Mrs. Bradford's Elegant Turbans, received by the last packet-boat from London" and "The Miss Hexhams' Elegant Assortment of Dresses from London, just opened," no doubt received their first airing at either the Races or the Theatre.

"As You Like It," "Hamlet," and "The Tempest" were given at three successive performances, and the first instance of Mrs. Whitlock's standing aside was the appearance of Mrs. Placide as *Ophelia* to Mr. Whitlock's *Hamlet.* She was no doubt terrified at the honor, and, "while acquitting herself with her usual propriety and correctness," the critic admits that some of her sentences were inaudible, but hastens to say, "but she is too de-

servedly a favorite with the public to suffer any imputation from a circumstance she strove to obviate."

The Benefits began early this season, and on February 6, for Mrs. Jones, "The Tempest" and "The Sultan" were given, with comic interpolations and songs concluding with a local skit, "Jacob Gawky's Ramble from Boston to Charleston."

At Mr. Whitlock's Benefit, "The Roman Father," there was introduced "A Poetical Tale" written by a lady and addressed to the Army of the United States of America, called "The Standard of Liberty," which was delivered by Mrs. Whitlock:

MRS. WHITLOCK'S BENEFIT.

City Theatre, the 3rd Instant
A Favorite Tragedy never acted here, called
"Cleone, or The Injured Wife."
Written by R. Dodsley.

The fable of this tragedy is built upon an old Legend of St. Genevieve, written originally in French and translated into English by William Lower.

Sifroy, ...Mr. Whitlock
Beaufort, Jun., ...Mr. West
Paulet, ...Mr. Radcliffe
Glauville, ...Mr. Ashton
Ragozin, ...Mr. Beete
Servants, ...Messrs. J. Jones and Helmbold
Beaufort, Sen., ...Mr. Jones
Cleone, ...Mrs. Whitlock
Cleone's Child, ...A Young gentleman of the city
Isabel, ...Mrs. Placide

After the play Mrs. Whitlock will deliver an Epilogue describing the Different Humours of the Spanish Husband, the Dutch, the Italian, the French, and John Bull, the English Husband.

Mr. J. Jones presented as the main attraction for his benefit "A Celebrated Play (never performed here) as performed at the Haymarket Theatre, London upwards of sixty nights with the greatest applause, called 'Zorinski, or Liberty Preserved in Poland'."

Mr. Whitlock as *Romeo* supported Mrs. West as *Juliet* for her benefit.

Mr. Sollee (in response to public opinion, no doubt) closed his house for Passion Week, and Mrs. Placide's Benefit, April 8, was the last evening until Easter Monday.

Mr. and Mrs. Whitlock supported her in "The English Merchant," he as *Freeport* and she as *Lady Alton,* and it was advertized as the last night of their engagement here. During the evening Mr. and Mrs. Placide danced a *Minuet de la Cour* and a *Gavotte,* and she danced a Hornpipe. In the Interlude, Mrs. Placide was *Galatea* to Mr. Whitlock's *Pygmalion,* and after the farce she and Mr. Lavalette introduced a Mock Minuet. Mr. Placide knew how quickly the public forgets disagreeable things when it is amused and entertained, so he floated his recently acquired young partner on the rising tide of popularity, through a haze of beautiful colors and rhythmic motions, and she was singing and dancing herself into the hearts of the audiences. In these rôles she appeared upon the stage far more than any other actress. Her ambitious partner saw to it that in all the dances and in all the womens' parts in the pantomimes she was in the center of the stage.

The *Pas-de-Quatre* was often danced by Mr. and Mrs. West, Mrs. Placide and Mr. J. Jones — all young people together, who as Shepherds and Shepherdesses wore charming costumes, and Miss Duthé, the youngest of them all, joined either two in an *Allemande de Trois;* or most generally Mr. Placide led Mrs. Placide and Miss Duthé in the most intricate steps in the *Allemande*; and they all joined together in the Garland Dance at an evening's conclusion, when Terpsichore always scored heavily. "The Fête Champêtre, when

the stage will be illuminated with *upwards of 500 lights* for the Dances," was the evening's brilliant feature.

Mr. and Mrs. Whitlock were induced to remain with the company until after Mr. Sollee's Benefit; and on Mrs. Robinson's evening they took the leading characters in "The Mourning Bride."

Mr. Jones, the comedian, crowded as much fun and nonsense into his evening as possible. He came to Charleston from the Boston Theatre as "a good fun-maker," and he lived up to this measure, giving perfect satisfaction to all.

Mr. Sully, Sen., appeared with the company in the elaborate revival of "La Belle Dorothée" under Mr. Placide's direction, and with Mrs. Placide in the title. This gorgeous pantomime was the French Theatre's chief attraction at its initial performance here. The following note appeared after the advertisement:

"The unbounded applause with which this pantomime was first received and the surprising effect it had on the audience, by the concern they took in the fate of *Dorothée,* has induced the Manager to spare no pains or expense in getting it up for the entertainment of the Public." It scored another great success.

On March 20, Mr. Placide brought to the notice of the public an arrangement of the pantomime, " 'Alcesta, or the Force of Love and Friendship,' never exhibited on any stage in America. The sceneries and dresses are entirely new and the subject is very interesting; it is taken from the story of Admetus." This was prepared for his own benefit that evening with the following cast:

THREE ACT PANTOMIME.
Benefit Mr. Placide, called
"Alcesta, or the Force of Love and Friendship."

Admetus, ...Mr. Placide
Hercules, ...Mr. Lavalette
Pluto, ...Mr. Ashton
Grand Priest, ...Mr. J. West
Charon, ...Mr. Helmbold
Furies, ...Supernumeraries
Guards of Admetus, ...Messrs. Radcliffe, Beete, etc.
Hunters, ...Messrs. J. Jones, Sully, etc.
Eliza, favorite of Alcesta, with a Song, ...Mrs. J. West
Emma, favorite of Alcesta, with a dance, ...Miss Duthé
Ladies attending Alcesta, ...Mrs. Ashton, Miss Chaucer
Cybele, ...Mrs. Jones
Proserpine, ...Mrs. Robinson
Alcesta, ...Mrs. Placide

A local production, "The Man of the Times, or Scarcity of Cash," was a farce "written by Mr. Beete of the City Theatre" for his own benefit.[1] After the bill was this card: "We have been favored with a perusal of this piece, and venture to pronounce it will be well received. The satire is keen, the moral good, and there are several comic situations in the course of the plot. We hope a generous public will reward the performer and man of letters.

"Between the acts of the farce Mrs. Whitlock will recite an 'Ode to Reflection,' by Mr. Beete.

"On April 20, the after-piece for Mr. Ashton's benefit was 'The Sicilian Romance' written by Mr. Henry Siddons, son of Mrs. Siddons of the Drury Lane Theatre and nephew to Mrs. Whitlock (never performed in this city.)

"Julia with a Song written for this occasion to oblige Mr. Ashton, and he flatters himself no small Ornament in the Opera, by a Young Lady of this City."

Mr. Matthew Sully, Sr., had been a great Harlequin

[1] "The Man of the Times, or Scarcity of Cash" — Written by Mr. Beete, Comedian, City Theatre. Printed by W. P. Young, State Printer, 43 Broad Street, Copyright secured, 1797. A Presentation Copy is now owned by the Library Society of Charleston, in dark green leather — gold tooled.

in his time, and the chief attraction of Mrs. Radcliffe's Benefit was "Harlequin's Invasion:" *"Harlequin* for this night only, Mr. Sully, the once celebrated Harlequin in England, who, to oblige a friend has in his advanced state of life undertaken the arduous character and trusts his exertions in that situation will be gratifying to the audience who may honor the Theatre with their presence."

Ticket scalpers had appeared in Charleston and this note of warning was sounded: "Gentlemen are particularly requested not to purchase tickets or checks of the boys who crowd about the doors, as such tickets and checks (for the most part) are fraudulently obtained."

After Mrs. West's performance of "Juliet," it was stated: "Both the play and entertainment went off with considerable éclat, and after the precautions taken, the public had less reason this evening than usual to be offended with the noise of riotous young men and the frequent appearance of foppery behind the scenes; circumstances extremely unpleasant and which we hope the Manager will in future enforce with most rigorous measures to prevent."

The evening for the benefit of the Proprietor of the City Theatre had arrived, and after this the Whitlocks would depart, and the remaining benefits of the lesser lights would take place without their assistance.

"Almeyda, an Interlude," "Hunt the Slipper," and the farce, "All the World's a Stage, or the Butler in Buskins," with Mr. Jones as *Diggory, the Spouting Butler,* were given for Mr. Sollee's Benefit:

THE TRAGEDY ALMEYDA.

This new tragedy cannot fail to please the public in the highest degree. The subject is most interesting and affecting, the language beautiful and captivating, and to prove the excellency of the part of *Almeyda*, it is only necessary to say that it was written on purpose for Mrs. Siddons.

The public who have already witnessed the vast abilities of Mrs. Whitlock and who place her at the right side of her sister, will believe that she is equally fit for the part of *Almeyda*, etc.

This play is given out positively for the last time this season and it is hoped a crowded house will witness the entertainment in order to encourage the Proprietor of the Theatre in endeavoring to get a well chosen set of eminent performers for the next season.

After a very successful winter and spring, in which both Mr. and Mrs. Whitlock had acquitted themselves brilliantly — especially Mrs. Whitlock — taking each fifty different characters, from Shakspeare down to Farce and Interlude, they left the company for a well-earned rest, engaged to return to Charleston the next year.

A burlesque was given by Messrs. Nelson and Helmbold: "Tom Thumb, or the Downfall of the Giants," of which was said:

"This piece is perhaps one of the best burlesques that ever appeared and may properly be considered as a sequel to 'The Duke of Buckingham's Rehearsal,' as it has taken in the absurdities of almost all the writers of tragedy of recent times. . . . In a word this piece possesses in the highest degree the principal merit of Burlesque; viz: That while it points out the faults of every other writer, it leaves no room for the discovery of any in itself."

In his Benefit, Mr. Nelson solicited "the generous patronage which has so long distinguished the inhabitants of this enlightened Metropolis."

Mr. Mayberry, the Box-Office Keeper, introduced to the city a new comedy in two acts "Bon Ton, or High

Life Above Stairs;" and Mr. Lavalette, "Wishing to render himself agreeable to the Ladies and Gentlemen of Charleston, and to merit their suffrage, has chosen from history a subject truly theatrical and proper to form a Grand Pantomime, with select musical pieces from the French Operas, 'The Golden Fleece,' 'Iphigénie,' 'Tauride,' etc.—none of which has ever yet been performed in America, etc. This Pantomime is entitled, 'The Princess of Babilone.' "

A stage-struck amateur who had taken a few minor rôles during the season had the last benefit. His claims to public patronage were stated: "William H. Torrans takes the liberty of informing his friends and the public that through the humanity of Mr. Sollee, who considering his distressed situation, with a large Infant Family, has granted him the uses of his Theatre and Wardrobe, etc., etc." His entertainment, a Tragedy, Masonic Epilogue, and the "Dramatic Satire of Lethe," was concluded with an address to the "Genius of America" by himself. This rang down the curtain on Mr. Sollee's season of 1797.

LIST OF PERFORMANCES AT THE CITY THEATRE — SEASON 1797.

1797

Jan. 6 — The Grecian Daughter
The First Floor, or Macaroni Pastry Cook,.....1st performance here

9 — The Provoked Husband
The Agreeable Surprise
Ballet Pantomime — The Bird Catcher

11 — The Carmelite, ...1st performance here
The Mayor of Garratt
Ballet Pantomime, — "Bird Catcher"

13 — The Child of Nature
The Maid of the Oaks
A Fête Champêtre
Dance of Shepherds and Shepherdesses

16 — Isabella, or The Fatal Marriage
An Epithalamium with original music
The Farmer

SOLLEE AT CITY THEATRE—1797

Jan. 18 — The Jealous Wife
Pantomime, "The Old Grow Young," or the "Power of Cupid"
Garland Country Dance
20 — Tragedy, The Carmelite, (by particular desire)
Barnaby Brittle
23 — Douglas
Pantomime Ballet, "The Old Grow Young"
The Romp
25 — She Stoops to Conquer
Ballet Pantomime, The Coopers
The Virgin Unmasked
27 — The Mourning Bride
The Poor Soldier
30 — The Gamester
No Song, No Supper
Feb. 1 — As You Like It
Don Juan, ...1st performance here
3 — Hamlet
The Citizen
6 — The Tempest
Jacob Gawky's Ramble from Boston to Charleston, Mr. Jones
The Farmer's Blunder
Sultan
7 — Venice Preserved
Ballet Pantomime — "The Old Grow Young"
The Agreeable Surprise
8 — Isabella, or The Fatal Marriage
Rope Dancing, by Mr. Placide
The Purse
9 — The West Indian
The Grand Italian Shades
Maid of the Oaks
Dance of Shepherds and Shepherdesses
10 — The Grecian Daughter
Don Juan
11 — The Roman Father
The Old Soldier
Love à la Mode, ...Benefit Mr. Whitlock
13 — Inkle and Yarico
Collins' Ode on the Passions, (recited by Mrs. Whitlock)
Pantomime, The Milliner
Country Dance and Allemande
Three Weeks after Marriage
15 — The Wonder, or A Woman Keeps a Secret
The Death of Captain Cook
Grand Pantomime Entertainment
17 — George Barnwell
The Grand Italian Shades
Padlock
20 — Zara, (Tragedy from French of Voltaire)
Dancing on the Tight Rope
The Quaker

Feb. 22 — Romeo and Juliet
Grand Masquerade, Minuet de la Cour and Gavotte
Rosina
24 — Such Things Are
La Belle Dorothée, (under direction of Mr. Placide)
27 — Percy
Pantomime Ballet, The Coopers
Who's the Dupe?

Mar. 3 — The Way to Keep Him
The Grand Italian Shades
The Highland Reel
4 — Inkle and Yarico
The Milliners
6 — The Orphan
Ballet — The Two Woodcutters
The Children of the Wood
8 — Love in a Village, (Opera)
A Statue Dance
The Citizen
10 — The Mountaineers
March of Moorish Guards
Three Weeks After Marriage
13 — Jane Shore
Ballet, Two Quakers
Peeping Tom of Coventry, (Musical Farce)
15 — Everyone Has His Faults
Grand Pantomime, La Belle Dorothée
17 — All in the Wrong, (Comedy), ...1st performance here
The Shamrock
Modern Antiques
20 — The Fair Penitent
New Pantomime in 3 acts called, Alcesta, or The Force of Love and Friendship, ...By Mr. Placide
24 — Wild Oats
Repetition of Alcesta
27 — Richard III
(Richard, Mr. W. H. Torrans, being his first appearance on this stage)
Lock and Key, (Musical Farce — never exhibited here)
29 — A Bold Stroke for a Husband
The Grecian Fabulist, (Recited by Mr. Ashton)
Cymon and Silvia
Procession of Knights and Garland Dance, Benefit Mrs. J. West
31 — All in the Wrong
Dancing on the Tight Rope
The Lock and Key

Apr. 3 — Cleone, ...1st time here
Epilogue, by Mrs. Whitlock
The Deuce is in Him
(Mrs. Whitlock's Benefit)

Apr. 5 — Zorinski, or Liberty Preserved in Poland
The Anacreontic Society
The Midnight Hour
(Benefit Mr. J. Jones)

8 — The English Merchant
Minuet de la Cour, Gavotte and Hornpipe
Pygmalion and Galatea
High Life Below Stairs
(Last performance till Easter Monday)
(Benefit Mrs. Placide)

17 — School for Scandal
All the World's a Stage

20 — The Deserted Daughter, ...1st time here
Belles Have At Ye All, ...1st time here
Eulogium on Free Masonry
The Sicilian Romance, ...1st time here
Song written for the Occasion, by a Young lady of the City
(Benefit Mr. Ashton)

22 — Rule a Wife and Have a Wife, ...1st time here
The Beggar's Petition
Speaking Pantomime, Harlequin's Invasion
Comic Songs
(Benefit Mr. Radcliffe)

24 — The Rivals
Comic Songs, by Mr. Jones
Tight-Rope Dancing, ...Mr. Placide
A Prelude to a new Farce
The Man of the Times, by Mr. Beete, 1st performance on any stage
Ode to Reflection, written by Mr. Beete, recited by Mrs. Whitlock
(Benefit Mr. Beete)

26 — Fortune's Fool, ...1st time here
Chrononhotonthologos
The Mogul Tale
(Benefit Mr. Jones)

29 — The Mourning Bride
Prologue, by Mr. Ryan
Thomas and Sally
Epilogue, written by Mr. Beete
(Benefit Mrs. Robinson)

May 2 — Almeyda, (new tragedy never performed in America)
Interlude, Hunt the Slipper
All the World's a Stage — Farce

6 — The Jew
Divertissement of songs and duets
Liberty and Slavery, recited by a young gentleman of the City
Tom Thumb, or the Downfall of the Giants, 1st time in Charleston
(Benefit Messrs. Nelson and Helmbold)

PERFORMANCES BY PERMISSION AT THE CITY THEATRE AFTER CLOSE OF THE REGULAR SEASON.

May 15 — The Servant Mistress
Pygmalion and Galatea
The Princess of Babylon, ...1st time here
Pantomime, arranged by Mr. Lavalette
(Benefit Mr. Lavalette)

20 — Douglas
Masonic Epilogue
Indian War Dance and Songs
Lethe
Address to the Genius of America
(Benefit Mr. W. H. Torrans)

June 28 — Catherine and Petruchio
Eulogium on Battle of Sullivan's Island
The Poor Soldier
Songs and Dances
(Benefit Mr. Nelson and Mr. Torrans)

CHAPTER XVI

Fall Season of the City Theatre, 1797
Introducing
The Exquisite Mrs. Williamson
Mr. and Mrs. Cleveland
Mrs. Tubbs and her daughter, Miss Arnold,
And
Many New Players.
Mr. Sollee's First Exchange of Boston and Charleston Companies.
The Greenwich Pensioner, or Press Gang, Ballet-Pantomime, Arranged by Mr. Placide.

CHAPTER XVI

After his praiseworthy winter and spring season of six months as purveyor of the highest grade theatrical wares to the Charleston public, a very ambitious idea came to the Proprietor of the City Theatre, which took him to Boston to perfect, soon after the close of his theatre at the end of May. The first public notice of it follows:

THEATRICAL INTELLIGENCE.

Copy of a letter from Mr. Sollee, dated Boston, 25th July, 1797 — Dear Sir:

I am very happy to announce to you that my exertions to procure to the city of Charleston the first company in America, have been crowned with the most compleat success. You will see by the newspapers of Boston that I have settled a very important piece of business for the theatrical entertainment of this place and Charleston. The two companies already fixed upon are of equal strength, and by exchanging them every winter it will bring a very satisfactory novelty to the public. As for my part, it is not so much my own interest I have consulted, as the persuasion I am in that the company will be deserving of the confidence and support of the friends of the drama. I am, with respect, dear sir, your most obedient Servant,

John Sollee.

Boston, July 25.

AUTHENTIC.

The citizens of Boston are assured that for five years to come their amusements will not be disturbed by any opposition between the two theatres. A formal agreement has taken place between Mr. Hodgkinson, manager of the New York Company and Mr. Sollee proprietor of the City Theatre in Charleston, who have engaged the two theatres in town.

The Haymarket will be reserved for summer exhibitions; the Federal Street for winter. The plan for the winter theatre is to have one company for Boston and one for Charleston, to be exchanged every season. The persons already fixed upon and partly engaged are: For Boston — Mr. and Mrs. Barrett, Mr. and Mrs. Marshall, Mr. and Mrs. C. Powell, Mr. and Mrs. S. Powell, Mr. and Mrs. Harper, Mr. and Mrs. Graupner, Mr. and Mrs. Lege, Mons. and Mad. Gardie, Messrs. Villiers, Kenny, Dickinson and J. Jones, Mrs. Allen and Miss Harrison.

For Charleston — Mr. and Mrs. Williamson, Mr. and Mrs. Whitlock, Mr. and Mrs. Jones, Mr. and Mrs. Cleveland, Mr. and Mrs. Hughes, Mr. and Mrs. Placide, Mr. and Mrs. Rowson; Messrs. Chal-

mers, Williamson, Downie and McKenzie; Misses Broadhurst and Green.

City *Gazette and Daily Advertiser*
August 15, 1797.

Charleston was a haven for the dramatic profession. Mr. Sully and family were residents here as were Mr. and Mrs. Placide, Mr. Audin, the Charleston Scene-painter and his family; Mr. Sollee and his family, and most of the French players, and a great many actors spent their off seasons here.

Mr. and Mrs. Edgar were always lurking around, and he succeeded before the opening of the regular season in securing an advance benefit for himself, wafted on the wings of Mr. Sollee's generosity in the use of the City Theatre and wardrobe, and through the support of the summer troupe, who still lingered here. His selections for the Benefit, which was given October 9, were — "Tancred and Sigismunda," "The Register Office," songs and dances, and a new Ballet-Pantomime arranged by Mr. Placide, called, "The Greenwich Pensioner, or the Press Gang."

Those taking part were Mr. and Mrs. Placide, Mr. Vandervelt from Philadelphia, and Messrs. Lewis, Nelson, and Grey.

Mrs. Edgar was also to have had a benefit, but a card from her read: "Mrs. Edgar is compelled to relinquish her benefit announced for Monday next, as Mr. Placide declines performing in consequence of information having reached him of the near approach of Mr. Jones and Company," etc.

No advance notices appeared of the opening of the fall season, save that on Monday, November 6, the *Gazette* informed the public that, "the City Theatre will

be opened tomorrow evening with 'Venice Preserved,' 'The Spoiled Child'," etc.

The Theatrical notices and bills had been very much curtailed during the past two years, and whereas prior to this full casts and bills always occurred at least twice for every performance, and in the earlier days half a dozen times, and synopses of Pantomimes at great length, during this season the latter were very much abbreviated and a short notice of plays and casts was given only on the days of performance.

The personnel of the new company will be shown in the first bill of the season:

THE CITY THEATRE

November 7, 1797

Will open this evening with the celebrated Tragedy
"Venice Preserved, or A Plot Discovered."

Duke of Venice, ...Mr. McClough
(being his first appearance on this stage.)
Priuli, ...Mr. Whitlock
Jaffier, ...Mr. Edgar
Pierre, ...Mr. Williamson
(from the Theatre Royal, Hay-Market, being his first appearance on this stage.)
Renault, ...Mr. Jones
Bedamour, ...Mr. Downie
(from the Theatre Royal, Bath, being his first appearance on this stage.)
Elliot, ...Mr. Dickson
Theodore, ...Mr. Stephens
Spinosa, ...Mr. J. Jones
Officer, ...Mr. McKenzie
Belvidera, ...Mrs. Whitlock

To which will be added a Farce called
The Spoiled Child

Little Pickle, the Spoiled Child, ...Mrs. Williamson
(from the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden being her first appearance on this stage.)
Old Pickle, ...Mr. Hughes
(from the Theatre Royal, Edinburgh, being his first appearance on this stage.)
Tag, the Rhymer, ...Mr. Jones
John, ...Mr. J. Jones
Maria, ...Mrs. Placide
Miss Pickle, ...Mrs. Edgar

All the city on the *qui vive* to see the members of the new company and to enjoy again the distinguished Mrs. Whitlock as *Belvidera* — and to satisfy itself of the many attractions of the new actress as *Little Pickle*— brought out a full house for the opening night.

The bill for the second performance showed more new names in the cast. In "The Jew, or Benevolent Hebrew," with Mr. Williamson as *Sheva*; Mrs. Hughes from the Theatre Royal, Edinburgh, made her first appearance as *Dorcas*. "A celebrated song called the 'Bonny Bold Soldier' introduced 'Mrs. Tubbs (late Mrs. Arnold) from the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden'."

Mrs. Tubbs, in the light of subsequent events, as the grandmother to-be of Edgar Allan Poe, is of more interest to historians than she was in her own day, yet she had a pretty voice and pleasing presence, and was a good actress. Her second husband added nothing to her fame, either in name or accomplishment, and she is chiefly interesting in this century as the mother of Miss Arnold. Mrs. Tubbs was a "Vocalist" at Covent Garden, singing the interpolated songs, and does not seem to have had "speaking parts" until her first season in Boston, 1796. There, however, she played a number of ambitious parts for a brief period, in comedy, farce, opera, and pantomime; and she did the same in Charleston, where she was very much liked and commended for her accomplishments. Mrs. Tubbs made her Charleston début in an acting part on November 14, as *Lady Freelove* in "The Jealous Wife;" and her little daughter, Miss Arnold, made her first appearance November 18, with a song called "The Market Lass."

FALL SEASON CITY THEATRE—1797

NOVEMBER 18 — THE CITY THEATRE.

The exercises of the City Theatre on Thursday evening were the tragedy of "Douglas" and "The Spoiled Child." The performances were conducted with a spirit and taste that obtained the highest applause, and sufficiently proved there was not wanting on the part of the performers any exertion that could contribute to the entertainment of the public.

The merits of Mrs. Whitlock have been so frequently the subject of applause that further commendation might now seem unnecessary; her *Lady Randolph* is a correct classical impressive exhibition, manifesting a thorough knowledge of her author and a mind well versed in dramatic composition. *Lady Randolph* has long been considered a character altogether difficult in its representation; the public should therefore be satisfied that they have restored to them an actress whose abilities qualify her to shine in the most arduous walks of the drama.

Mr. Downie was well received in the character of *Lord Randolph*, and Edgar exhibited *Young Norval* with a correctness of judgment that could not fail to give the most lively impression of that character.

The novelty however which principally attracted the attention of the audience, was the lively and spirited performance of Mrs. Williamson in "The Spoiled Child." This deserving actress may be said to possess an unparalleled taste for comic humour and deservedly to rank at the head of her profession in this line of acting. All those acquirements which render an actress graceful and entertaining, happily combine to form the character of Mrs. Williamson, and the zeal with which the public have so justly applauded her, gives the greatest assurance of her becoming a favorite of the town.

Mrs. Williamson, who as Miss Fontenelle had achieved success on the London boards at a single bound, made her first appearance at Covent Garden, November 6, 1788, as *Moggy McGilpin* in the original production of "The Highland Reel." She distinguished herself by a greater flow of animal spirits than any heroine ever exhibited before. When she played her second part at Covent Garden as *Sophia* in "The Toy," it was admitted that she showed glimpses of exquisite comedy. She next played at the Hay-Market and in 1793 appeared as *Moggy* in "The Highland Reel" at Edingburgh where Mr. Williamson was engaged. They fell in love with each other and were married soon after and came to America early in 1796 making their first appearance at the Boston Theatre, January 25 — he as the *Moor* in "Othello" and she as *Little Pickle* in "The Spoiled Child," which was declared to be "the most astonishing and brilliant display of theatrical genius ever exhibited in America." At the close of that season Mr. Williamson succeeded Mr. Harper as Manager of the Boston Theatre.[1]

Mr. Sollee's perfected plans of regular exchange companies for Charleston and Boston seemed an assured

[1] "History of the American Theatre" — G. O. Seilhamer.

success, and the brilliant group of actors and actresses now assembled in this city gave augury of splendid results, and the theatre-going public made ready to enjoy the season to the fullest. The new-comers had already settled down in their Southern quarters and had begun to familiarize themselves with the townspeople and their own surroundings. Mr. Jones, Manager as well as Chief Comedian of the City Theatre, was evidently taken into Mr. Sollee's confidence when he was maturing his plans for the Boston-Charleston exchange in the summer time, and Mr. Jones was inspired to use it as a theme when he wrote the farce, "Jacob Gawky's Ramble from Boston to Charleston," which was given at that time, and which was repeated at the third performance after "The Sultan" in which Mrs. Williamson was *Roxana,* and Mrs. Tubbs and Mrs. Placide shared the honors in the songs.

Mrs. Whitlock was taking most of the same rôles in the pieces she had played here last season and was still the Star of the greatest magnitude, although she was approaching a partial eclipse, by decree of the public.

On November 25 was announced a new Comedy, "Wives as They Were, and Maids as They Are." — "The design of this comedy is truly dramatic, it is to exhibit the female manners of the last age in contrast with those of the present. *Lord* and *Lady Priory* are a husband and wife of the old school: *Lady Mary Raffle* and *Miss Dorillon* are Modern belles. The formality of manners on one side and the giddy thoughtlessness of the other parties are well depicted, etc. Mrs. Jones was *Lady Mary* and Mrs. Whitlock *Miss Dorillon,* the young belle."

The following criticism appeared next day:

The new comedy was favorably received by a numerous and brilliant auditory; the correctness of the principal performers in so far as their several parts suited their talents could but secure approbation but their satisfaction would have been considerably augmented if Mrs. Williamson had taken the character of one of the modern belles of fashionable life, which is so well depicted in the play. Why the abilities of this young, elegantly accomplished actress which could certainly be exercised with great effect in many of the comedies now in vogue have been restricted to a few inconsiderable characters in farce, has been asked by very many who frequent the theatre. It cannot surely be owing to any aversion in Mrs. Williamson to the task of studying more important and difficult characters, for her *Child of Nature, Lady Teazle, Ophelia* and *Rosalind,* all come to us by report from the Northward, as performances in the highest style of finish and with the stamp of London approval. If her non-appearance in some such character here is to be attributed to a partiality of the Managers in casting the characters, they must soon find cause to regret it, for they may be assured that if persisted in, it cannot but prove as unprofitable to themselves as it is unsatisfactory to the public. Mr. Hughes is a good, indeed an excellent Old Man, and he may rely upon it that this opinion is general and that he has no occasion to turn to the audience so often as he does, to convince himself or them of it. In the opera of "The Poor Soldier," Mrs. Placide's *Norah* and Mrs. Tubbs's *Kathleen* would be sufficient to make them favorites on any stage in America if not in Europe, etc., etc.

This very candid and somewhat impertinent critique, brought this response:

"Fully satisfied with the public approbation in every line she has yet attempted, Mrs. Williamson entertained no apprehensions that she stood in need of a Literary Champion. It has not been an idle but an industrious speculation which has devoted whatever talent she possesses to deserve that favour she has everywhere found.

"The writer is aroused by the critic of Monday, who is insolent in his manners and unjust in his insinuations."

There was great indignation in the company over the critical article, and their attitude was such that it elicited the following, presumably from Mr. Jones, the Manager:

Can established merit be so *sore* that the public prints must not give opinions on stage representations, which are so generally subjected to, and corrected by them, without stirring up the rougher passions? If the advice the writer recommends were to be adopted as well as given, a shield of propriety might be raised, against which the darts of anonymous criticisms would fall hurtless. Professional people cannot judge of each other, dispassionately, the public mind is the criterion which will duly adjudge to each their respective lines, and say what is idle and what is overweening presumption. The writer of the above who never in his whole life published an opinion of plays or performers, or wrote one line tending to their prejudice, leaves his name with the printer, and to no insinuations tending to foment a dispute before the public, will he deign to reply, that is not in like manner authenticated.

In placing two brilliant stars in his theatrical firmament, Mr. Sollee showed himself lacking in wisdom, if not prodigal in provision. Professional jealousy has come down through the ages, and wounded pride is seldom cured. With the prestige attaching to the name of Kemble, it would be difficult for one of the family, sister of the great John and of the incomparable Sarah, to share evenly the honors with one who mothered her own stage ability, and, besides this, was younger and exquisitely beautiful. It might have been possible to keep the peace if one had ruled in the tragic and the other in the comic line, but both were versatile, and, while Mrs. Whitlock excelled in tragedy and Mrs. Williamson in comedy, they both jangled sweet bells out of tune as equally appealing *Ophelias,* took the breeches part in "As You Like It" with the same irresistible charm, and both adored the rôle of *Juliet,* and probably all the town was humming under its breath the hit of "The Beggar's Opera," "How Happy Could I Be with Either Were T'other Dear Charmer Away."

As they both stayed on, and the Manager was not Argus-eyed in detecting all the gathering clouds, nor omnipotent in averting a storm, it came—not, however,

between the chief rivals, but, arriving by devious ways, it broke eventually at the feet of the Manager.

On November 27 was given the new Musical Drama, "The Adopted Child," one of the recent favorites of the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, by Samuel Birch. Little Miss Arnold was *the Child;* and Mr. Tubbs made his first appearance the same evening as *Tope Locho* in "The Mountaineers," and Mrs. Tubbs took the lead in the farce, "The Purse."

After the excitement, caused by the acid critic demanding that Mrs. Williamson be oftener brought before the footlights, had died down, the Manager began cautiously to respond to the desire, and that charming actress was endearing herself nightly to every newcomer as well as the old, by her irresistible effervescence of spirit and delightful originality in the interpretation of her characters.

Mrs. Whitlock was still leading in tragedy and top-comedy, but when it came to the second presentation of "Romeo and Juliet," the diplomatic Manager saw that Mr. and Mrs. Cleveland were in the title rôles. The "solemn accessories of the boards," were much relied upon in this tragedy, and the "Grand Funeral Procession of Juliet to the Monument of the Capulets," tied with the heroine in her emotional despair. The audience was equally interested in each.

Mr. and Mrs. Placide's specialties had not been called on as much as usual this season, on account of the rich material on hand for the legitimate drama. There were five couples now in this Stock Company, with repertoires of such extraordinary length and quality, as would make leading American actors today green with envy;

but who would never emulate their example as it would mean real drudgery and many personal sacrifices of comfort and pleasure to master.

Mrs. Williamson in some of her best rôles, *Moggy McGilpin, Priscilla Tomboy, the Romp* and *Little Pickle, the Spoiled Child,* in which she ran the gamut of pranks "to admiration," always crowded the theatre to capacity, and all the town knew her in these characters.

One of the toasts at the anniversary meeting of St. Andrew's Society[1] was "To all the bonny Lasses that dance amang the heather," and it is presumed that all the members turned out en-masse "for the last performance this season" of "The Highland Reel" with its hilarious mirth and merriment, with bag-pipes and kilties, songs and dances, and the bonny Mrs. Williamson as *Moggy,* Mr. Jones as *Shelty,* and Mr. and Mrs. Placide leading in the dances. The latter also appeared in the lead for the first time this season in the elaborate pantomime "The Bird Catcher," and a double Allemande afterwards.

Mr. and Mrs. Cleveland were taking a number of the principal rôles at this time. They had given great pleasure in "Romeo and Juliet," and on December 6, Mr. Cleveland appeared as *Richard III,* with Mrs. Whitlock as the *Queen,* Mrs. Placide as *Lady Anne,* Mrs. Robinson as the *Duchess of York,* and Miss Arnold as the *Duke of York.*

Mr. and Mrs. Cleveland, on coming to America, played first in Philadelphia, 1793-4, and then in New

1 The St. Andrew's Society of Charleston, founded 1729, is the oldest charitable organization in America.

York, Washington, and Boston, coming to Charleston from the Boston Theatre.

One of Mrs. Siddons's great characters was *Euphrasia* in "The Grecian Daughter," in which classical dignity was combined with emotion. Mrs. Whitlock was said strongly to resemble her sister, and they had many similar traits of character. Mrs. Siddons's costume for this heroine was described by Fitzgerald—and very likely Mrs. Whitlock's was similar—"a white dress under a long purple mantle with a train embroidered around the edge in gold, and with a golden bandeau worn around the head."

Under the management of Hallam and Hodgkinson in the Old American Company in Philadelphia, this country first had the joy of seeing "The Country Girl", with Mrs. Hodgkinson creating the American *Peggy.* This screamingly funny old English Comedy was first given in Charleston on December 8, with Mrs. Williamson as *Peggy* and her husband playing *Moody.* This country girl who wanted to be a boy, with her quaint costumes and enthralling situations, has never lost her hold on the people. The bewitching Mrs. Jordan made her entrance at Covent Garden as *Peggy* in its revival in 1811. As late as her period, New York enjoyed Ada Rehan's faultless rendition of the fascinating old character. Mrs. Williamson played *Peggy* here to the delight of all, as it was one of her most successful parts.

The 1797 fall season was drawing to a close. The new pieces given here for the first time were the farce, "The Wedding Day;" the comedy, "Wives as They Were, and Maids as They Are;" the musical drama, "The Adopted Child;" "The Country Girl;" "The Way to Get

Married;" and, the last performance, "A Cure for the Heart-ache."

Mrs. Williamson, on December 23, was *Rosalind,* and the criticism next morning of "As You Like it," read:

> The *Adam* of Whitlock; *Touchstone* of Jones, *Jaques* of Williamson and *Orlando* of Cleveland were given with feeling, humour, judgment and interest; but the main spring and action was in the delicate humour, the arch point, the pathetic sensibility of *Rosalind.* Mrs. Williamson was impressive, gay, touching and pointed. It would exceed the limits of this article to trace the numerous beauties of her performance, but it is wished to particularize the passages given with peculiar taste, and that operated with corresponding force on the auditory in the glow of genuine resentment when suspected by the usurping duke, her uncle; the delicate delineation of her passion for *Orlando* and the enchanting naiveté of the song with the Cuckoo accompanyment. It is perhaps but cold to compliment a lady upon her dress, which might possibly originate in the taste of another, but Mrs. Williamson's habiliments in the boy's part of *Rosalind,* was one of the sweetest pictures of stage paraphernalia ever exhibited.

On December 28 "Jane Shore" was given, with Mrs. Whitlock as *Mistress Shore,* one of the superlatively fine characters in high tragedy. Mr. Williamson played *Gloucester* and Mr. Whitlock *Dumont.*

Among the last performances of this season, Mrs. Placide took the lead a number of times, and in the comedy, "Everyone Has His Faults," she was the leading lady, *Miss Wooburn,* to Mr. Whitlock's *Lord Morland*; this was the character in which, as Miss Wrighten, she had made her début two years before.

The night after Christmas Mr. Tubbs was the main attraction of the evening, when "The Magic Chamber" followed the comedy, and, as a very agile Harlequin, made his escape from the Clown by an astonishing leap through a picture. Mr. and Mrs. Placide were *Pierrot* and *Columbine,* Mrs. Tubbs was the *Reaper,* with a song and Miss Arnold was *Cupid.*

Thomas Norton's Drury Lane success, "A Cure for

the Heart-Ache," with Mr. Williamson as *Sir Herbert Stanley* and Mrs. Williamson as *Jessey Oatland,* was a heartening subject for a last night, and after the fall of the curtain the Manager appeared, to say: "The public are most respectfully informed that on Monday evening, January 1st, the Company will, for the first time, perform in the Charleston Theatre."

After the lapse of a century and a quarter, the chronicler feels a poignant sympathy with the generous-hearted Mr. West in having his theatre wrested from him by a determined rival. But Mr. Sollee had shown signal ability in the management of the City Theatre; he was a man of vision, a competent executive, and had the artistic feeling of his race for perfection in detail, and had brought to the city of Charleston the two strongest companies the city had yet enjoyed, and had arranged for the leading actors and actresses of the country to play alternate seasons in Boston and Charleston for a number of years. The survival of the fittest![1]

PERFORMANCES IN THE CITY THEATRE
SEASON OF 1797.

Comedy or Tragedy	*Farce or Musical Piece*
Nov.	
7 — Venice Preserved	
9 — The Jew or Benevolent Hebrew	The Poor Soldier
11 — The Fair Penitent	The Romp
14 — The Jealous Wife	The Wedding Day
16 — Douglas or The Noble Shepherd	The Spoiled Child
18 — Comic Opera, the Highland Reel	Catherine & Petruchio
21 — George Barnwell	The Sultan
23 — She Stoops to Conquer	Rosina or the Reapers

1 The notices for the season and all bills were taken from the *City Gazette and Daily Advertiser.*

Nov.	*Comedy or Tragedy*	*Farce or Musical Piece*
25 —	Wives as They Were and Maids as They Are	The Poor Soldier
27 —	Wives as They Were and Maids as They Are	The Purse or the American Tar
29 —	The Mountaineers	The Adopted Child
Dec.		
1 —	Such Things Are	No Song, No Supper
2 —	The Highland Reel	The Lyar
4 —	The Grecian Daughter	The Adopted Child
6 —	Richard the Third	The Virgin Unmasked
8 —	The Country Girl	Agreeable Surprise
11 —	Wild Oats	The Spoiled Child
13 —	Romeo and Juliet	The Farmer
15 —	The Way to Get Married	The Romp
16 —	The Country Girl	The Lying Valet
18 —	The Way to Get Married	Maid of the Oaks
20 —	Cymbeline	No Song, No Supper
23 —	As You Like It	Pantomime, The Magic Chamber
26 —	Everyone Has His Faults	Pantomime, The Magic Chamber
28 —	Jane Shore	Highland Reel
30 —	A Cure for the Heart-Ache	The Lying Valet

CHAPTER XVII

The Charleston Theatre Winter Season, 1798.

A New Musical and Allegorical Masque entitled "Americania and Eleutheria, or A New Tale of the Genii," By a Citizen of Charleston.

Seventeen New Plays Produced.

Disaffection in the Company, resulting, before the end of the season, in the retirement of Mr. Sollee as Manager.

Leasing of the City Theatre for four years to Messrs. Williamson, Jones and Placide.

MRS. WHITLOCK

CHAPTER XVII

The Charleston Theatre was brilliantly illuminated for its reopening under Mr. Sollee's proprietorship, and the larger and more perfect appointments of the house were highly pleasing to the distinguished company that now enjoyed its superior advantages.

The new Comedy, "The Cure for the Heart-ache," had met with such unqualified success that its repetition was requested for the opening evening January 1, 1798.

The holiday spirit was in the air, and the humorous Prelude adapted to the occasion, "New Hay at the Old Market," which was the curtain-raiser, started things off in a spirit of merriment. Mr. Sollee received a compliment for "his zealous and constant endeavors to gratify the public, which recognized that he not only commanded success but deserved it," etc.

Special commendation was given Mr. Cleveland in the criticism following the last performances at the Church-Street Theatre, dwelling upon "the alacrity with which he executed the eccentric and highly diverting but very difficult character of *Young Rapid* evincing that his abilities are of the first rate, and vastly pleasing in a 'Cure for the Heart-ache'," etc. — and the musical choice for the initial performance at the Charleston, was "The Children in the Wood."

Jan. 8 — "The Tragedy of Bunker Hill, or the Death of General Warren," written by John Burke, late of Trinity College, Dublin, and performed at the Theatres of Boston and New York for fourteen nights, with unbounded applause.

> A nobler theme than this to grace the stage
> Where can we find in all the historic page?
> Of Rome and Cato's fall the world has rung
> Why not Columbia's rising fame be sung?

General Warren, ...Mr. Whitlock
Lord Percy, ...Mr. Downie
General Prescott, ...Mr. Nelson
General Putnam, ...Mr. J. Jones
Governor Gage, ...Mr. McKenzie
Sir Walter Howe, ...Mr. Clough
American Officer, ...Mr. Hughes
Servant, ...Mr. Mork
Abercrombie, ...Mr. Edgar
Elvira, ...Mrs. Whitlock
Anna, ...Mrs. Hughes
The whole to conclude with a grand Funeral Procession, with an elegy sung over the bier of Gen. Warren by Mrs. Tubbs and Mrs. Placide.

The new Comedy, "The Will," by Sir Frederick Reynolds, being played at the time at Drury Lane "with great applause," was given here January 12. The press notice of it the next morning said:

No modern play has perhaps laid stronger hold on the pleasurable sensations of the spectators. Human nature is here drawn with humor, simplicity and pathos, and the performance did credit to the perfect dramatic establishment in Charleston.

Mr. Jones was very happy in the humor of *Sir Solomon* and the situation at Copley's Cottage is one of the luckiest *coups de théâtre* since the famous School for Scandal Screen.

Albina Mandeville is well adapted to Mrs. Williamson's talents, and calls forth much of her best manner, as well in the *naiveté* of the generous, tender, affectionate girl, as in the assumed masculine airs of the smart young officer, etc.

Cicely in the hands of Mrs. Placide was interesting in the extreme, her appearance was beautiful simplicity itself in a rustic garb and gave great effect to *Sir Solomon's* ridiculous embarrassment.

Mrs. Edgar merited and met with applause for her correct performance. Mr. Hughes, Mr. Edgar and Mr. Cleveland, as good abilities never fail to do, brought characters not strong in themselves very forward on the canvas; nor must Mr. Downie be overlooked, who gave the double faced *Tutor*, half quiz, half jolly dog, half knave, half honest fellow, a very whimsical coloring. Such plays, ameliorating human passions, chastising manners and conforming morals, render the stage an essential public good.

A slight fire occurred behind the scenes during this play, but was quickly extinguished, having done no personal injury, but of such a nature as to require a month for its repair. The Company moved back to the Church-Street Theatre during this time; and returned to the Charleston on February 12, for the rest of the season.

February 12 — the bill for the evening:[1]

CHARLESTON THEATRE

The proprietor of the City Theatre respectfully informs the Ladies and Gentlemen of Charleston that on account of his having taken for the remainder of the season the Broad Street Theatre, the performances shall begin there this evening; and he expects that the motives which have induced him to remove the Company for awhile from his own Theatre will be very satisfactory to the friends of the drama in this city, especially when acquainted that every exertion has been already made, not only to maintain a Company equal to the one now existing, but also to improve it for the next season. The public is also informed that in the course of this week the Company will repeat the most favorite Novelties of this Season and also the Tragedy of "The Carmelite." The bills for the five nights will be in readiness on Tuesday morning and be delivered *gratis* at the City Theatre or at Major Bowen's office adjoining.

Race Week had come again and everything in the Show Line was booming; the "Orang-Outang," or Man of the Woods from Borneo, was delighting the small boys at the "Sign of the Spread Eagle," 81 King Street; Wax Works, Marble Composition Figures of the Royal Family of France, and a great Panorama of London were claiming their share of patronage, and the Theatre, as usual, was running every night.

A new *Harlequin,* Mons. Vandreville, appeared in "Harlequin Skeleton," assisted by the men of the troupe and Mrs. Placide as *Columbine.* This particular Harlequinade had been delighting American audiences since the year 1753, when Lewis Hallam's Company introduced it — "By Permission of the Worshipful the Mayor of Williamsburg, at the Old Theatre near the Capitol." These uproarious mirth-provokers rolled down the ages, adjusting themselves to the exigencies of the times, without losing any of their savor or zest.

Many new plays were being exhibited each night and others in rehearsal. A critic wrote:

1 All the Theatre-bills and notices for this season are taken from the *City Gazette and Daily Advertiser.*

THE CHARLESTON STAGE

Our dramatic amusements abound in novelty this season, the public liberality follows in course. The comic opera "Le Barbier de Seville" that most favorite performance of the French stage, enriched with the music of Sachini; is in preparation and will shortly make its appearance here under the title of "The Spanish Barber." This *chef d o'euvre* of Beaumarchais has long been the admiration of Europe. The present translation, it is said, is from the pen of Mr. Williamson, and was performed at the Boston Theatre under his direction. Candour speaks of it as the work of an able dramatist. Those who had been accustomed to laugh with Beaumarchais in his Parisian attire acknowledged an equal enjoyment in his American dress; but an audience in Charleston will be its own critic and judge for itself.

There were those in the community who still resented the ousting from the Charleston Theatre of Mr. West, who had superintended its building, had brought such sterling performers to its boards, had enriched civic institutions, and through whose generosity the French players (Mr. Sollee among them) had gained a foothold here. His attractive personality and broad human sympathy were still felt, and there was a certain aloofness from the usurpers among his strongest adherents. With the feeling that by-gones should be by-gones, a pacific subscriber came forward with the following:

THEATRIC

In doing justice to the theatrical establishment of this season, candour demands the acknowledgement of taste as due to the proprietor of that establishment; who with an ardor, liberality and spirit almost unequaled, stood forward stemming the tide of opposition, and at the hazard of his private fortune, has given the public of Charleston a drama *not to be excelled in any part of America.* As the first who reared the Standard of Professional Name and Talent to resort to, by nobly offering a remuneration equal to their wishes, he merits the meed of praise, so long as elegant public amusements may be considered to characterize a polished and liberal people! Lovers of the drama hailed as auspicious that appearance of a union of interests which took place in a former part of the season. It is a desideratum to have a theatre; it must be doubly so, to have the establishment upon a scale and foundation respectable and permanent. To attain that end all extraneous views and considerations which relate to prejudice as well as property must be abandoned as unworthy to sway the least decision of a tasteful and oppulent circle. Opposition is the bane of an undertaking which requires the unprejudiced love and unbiassed operation of the whole community; and by convulsing, weakening and

degrading, must terminate in the extinction of the principle instead of the contest.

Like two boys at strife for a bird's nest the subject of contention is torn in pieces; the callow nestling that might have been reared to melody and maturity scattered to the winds, ere a victory is gained in the struggle.

"A constant friend of the Drama" begs to insert a few observations on the performances of this present season, thinking they will have some weight with the public of Charleston:

"Everybody will allow that the Company is the best ever brought to this city and that the salaries given to the performers, would afford a London Company. Although this Company has performed twice as many novelties as was ever done in any season before, still I think they ought to exert themselves to present some of the pieces now being given at the Northward, which would stand as fair rivals of the most favorite plays already acted here. The comedies I mean are 'The Bank Note,' 'Speculation,' 'Love's Frailties,' and 'The Next Door Neighbor'." Some of these were already in rehearsal and most of them were given.

The following seventeen were all new to Charleston:

New Hay at the Old Market, The Battle of Bunker Hill, The Will, The Town before You, The Spanish Barber, Next Door Neighbors, How to Grow Rich, Americania and Eleutheria, Musical Masque, by a Charlestonian, Speculation, The Prisoner or Tiny Drummer Boy, First Love, Pantomime — La Bonne Fille, The Welsh Heiress, Ballet-Pantomime — The Sculptor, The Female Duellist, Better Late than Never, Historic Pantomime — Telemachus, and L'Américain ou L'Homme Raisonable.

For several weeks an elaborate local production had absorbed all the spare time of the Company and producers in getting the lines completed, the dresses made, the scenery and machinery set up, and the music arranged for it. This had been made ready for the first

benefit, that of Mrs. Jones's, February 9 — with Mrs. Cleveland and Mrs. Whitlock in the title rôles.

THEATRIC

Feb. 7, 1798

The public of Charleston, it is reported, are shortly to be gratified with the representation of a new dramatic piece written by one of their fellow citizens, in which the pleasing and the sublime are said to be united in an extraordinary degree. It has been spoken of for sometime past by those who have seen the manuscript of it, as a production that will prove highly honorable to the genius and talents of its author and happily calculated for stage-effect. The assiduous and well deserving Manager of the City Theatre, if our correspondent is rightly informed, has already incurred considerable expense and is making every necessary preparation to bring this piece forward in such manner as shall do justice to the author and credit to himself and Company.

Musical and Allegorical Masque
Never yet printed or performed, entitled
Americania and Eleutheria;
Or a New Tale of the Genii.

Jelemmo and Arianthus, Great Winged Spirits, attendants on Americania — Mr. Downie and Mr. Cleveland;

Offa, Chief of the Alleganian Satyrs — Mr. Jones;

Musidorus, The Alleganian Hermit, the only mortal in the masque — Mr. Whitlock;

Horbla, Chief of the dancing Satyrs — Mr. Placide;

Damonello, Lucifer, Horrendum and Tylpho, Dancing Satyrs — Messrs. Hughes, Tubbs, J. Jones and McKenzie.

Americania, Genius of America, a great spirit residing since the creation on the summit of the Allegani — Mrs. Cleveland.

Vesperia, a winged spirit, chief attendant on *Americania* — Mrs. Tubbs.

Hylba, Chief of the Hamadryads or Wood Nymphs, and principal dancer — Mrs. Placide.

Tintoretto, Luciabella, Juberaia, Ariella and Tempe, dancing nymphs — Mrs. Hughes, Mrs. Edgar, Miss Arnold, etc.

Eleutheria, Goddess of Liberty, who flies to the arms of Americania for protection — Mrs. Whitlock.

SKETCH OF THE PLOT

Hybla, a Mountain Nymph desirous to see a mortal, implores *Offa*, a satyr, to procure her that pleasure. *Offa* deludes an old Hermit up to the Summit of the Allegani Mountains to a great Rock inhabited by Genii or Aerial Spirits, the chief of whom called *Americania* understanding that the old Hermit is ignorant of the American Revolution, commands her attendants to perform an allegorical Masque for his information:

In Act first — A grand dance of Nymphs and saytrs who will form into groups of the most whimsical kind.

In act second — A meeting takes place between Eleutheria, the Goddess of Liberty and *Americania*, who descend in clouds on opposite sides.

A Pas-de-Deux between the Saytr *Horbla* and the nymph *Hybla*. The whole to conclude with a general dance of the Nymphs and Satyrs.

A Pas-de-Deux, by a young Master and a young Lady, and a *Pas-de-Trois*, by Mrs. Placide, Mr. Placide, and Mr. Tubbs.

Part of the criticism the following day, is quoted:

"Mrs. Whitlock, who always does infinite credit to the character she fills, exceeded herself, if possible, in that of *the Goddess of Liberty,* whose language and sentiments seemed as if they were particularly adapted for the employment of her talents to the best advantage; nor were Mrs. Cleveland in *Americania,* and Mrs. Placide and Mrs. Tubbs as attendant spirits (with songs) whose appearance always pleases, ever more charming.

"As to the piece itself, it abounds with exalted and poetic ideas, expressed in the most correct, elegant and harmonious language; and considering it has never been printed, and the allegorical design of it of course understood by but few, the general applause bestowed on this its first representation is a proof of its intrinsic merit. The original it is said contains five acts, only the two first of which were brought forward, but if the last acts of this are equal to the two first, there can be no doubt that the whole piece if published, will become a favorite one on all the American stages, not only because it is a native production, but because it is such a one as any country might be proud to call her own."

The storm that had been brewing so long was about to break, its herald being a small announcement in the morning paper of February 26 — to which a dainty finger was pointed between decorative head and tail

pieces: "Mrs. Whitlock respectfully informs the public and her Friends that her Benefit is postponed during the Manager's pleasure."

Disagreements and misunderstanding between the powers-that-be and the artistic fraternity, have existed since the days when complaints were addressed to Phoebus and the Muses:

"Oppressed with many calamities and languishing to death under the burden of a long and everlasting restraint, we the Comedians, Tragedians, and Actors of all sorts and sizes belonging to the famous private and public houses within the city of London, and the suburbs thereof, — in all humility present this our lamentable complaint," etc.

By 1798 the humility had departed, and the least of the players in Mr. Sollee's Company addressed the public in a very unbecoming manner, of which Mr. Sollee felt constrained to take notice. This was Mr. Tubbs. Before this, however, and on the same days that Mrs. Whitlock's card appeared, came this:

We the undersigned, acknowledge that Mr. Sollee has proposed to those of the performers who would insist upon having their money for last week's salaries, to pay them before the play began, and we certify that Messrs. Whitlock, Hughes, Tubbs, McKenzie and Clough have refused such proposition; and we certify also that Mr. Sollee has proposed to give tomorrow a good security for the payment of the salaries, provided that the performers would give also a security for the payment of their benefit nights charges. In consequence of which we here put our names as an attestation of the above. Signed:

Edward Jones
John B. Williamson
Thomas Cleveland
A. Placide
J. Jones.

City Gazette & Daily Advertiser—
Feb. 26, 1798.

In the disagreement about the payment of the last

week's salaries before the benefit should begin in March, Mr. Whitlock and Mr. Edgar incited some of the actors to rebellion, and the insistence that back pay should be made before they would play again, although each actor was indebted to the Manager for his transportation to Charleston, which amounted to more than the weekly salary of most of them.

Edgar, the beneficiary of both West and Sollee, showed himself an ingrate and most detestable character in this action.

The loyal members of the Company that same evening gave the comedy "Ways and Means" (very pertinent to the time) and "The Highland Reel" with Mrs. Williamson leading in both, and no member of the Company was more calculated than she to turn people's thoughts from grave to gay. An explanatory card appeared February 27th, from Mr. Jones, Assistant Manager and Cashier:

I, the undersigned do declare that since the beginning of the season there has been no particular day for paying the weekly salaries, which sometimes were paid on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, and I declare also that the performers have been paid up to the race week inclusively (Feb. 13 through 17). I acknowledge that at that epoch a sum of one hundred dollars or there-abouts, was advanced to some performers, and that Mr. Edgar is still indebted for advance of salary. I do declare finally, that a sum of more than eight hundred dollars has been advanced by Mr. Sollee for the support and passage of the Company from New York, which sum is to be paid back partly, upon the benefit nights; and that Mr. Sollee has not received a shilling from the receipts of the house, which have been faithfully deposited in my hands.

Edward Jones.

Mr. Sollee was a lavish provider for the handsome productions upon his stage; he was a most generous advertizer, and removing to the Charleston Theatre, and having to repair the damages to the house by a fire, and the incidental expenses of the two moves, put

him under unexpectedly heavy expenditures. Smarting under the injustice of the uprising — with only ten days' arrears — the insolence of Edgar, the audacity of Tubbs, and the dogged insistence of Mr. Whitlock, et al, Mr. Sollee "lit into 'em," as the country people say:

To the Editors of the *City Gazette and Daily Advertiser,* Messrs. Freneau and Paine:

The piece inserted in the State *Gazette* of yesterday signed by Franciscus Decimus Coriolanus William, ending in Tubbs, who had got over the bar before his advertisement appeared, would have been beneath my notice, by its meanness, but I am inculpated with owing him forty-three dollars for salary. I ask leave to let the public know that the same man, on the contrary is indebted to me a pretty large sum; that Mr. Tubbs having no money and nothing to lose, was one of the two men appointed by Messrs. Whitlock and Edgar as a brazen face, to come to me on the day of the behavior of the ringleaders; that Mr. Tubbs is the same who said to me in presence of Mr. Williamson, that the meeting was made at three o'clock for them to have time to get out hand-bills, and that they were to get the Theatre by leave of the Proprietors; that Mr. Tubbs is the same man who was so busy about distributing hand-bills, not only in the streets, in the stores, shops, etc., but sending children crying out in the streets "there is no play this night, the best performers don't play any more," (which pretty work has injured me five hundred dollars at least); that Mr. Tubbs is the same man who went with Mr. Edgar and McKenzie to the theatre in three districts of the house: Mr. Edgar in the gallery, Mr. McKenzie in the pit, and Mr. Tubbs at the door — animating the children to make a noise and preventing people from going to the play, saying there was nobody in the house. I knew this too late, or such impudence would have been punished as it deserved, by a good horse whipping, or in the same treatment as it is said Mr. Edgar met at his post in the gallery as he was hissing the apology of Mr. Jones for not playing the entertainment advertised.

I ask of the public if such a man as Mr. Tubbs ought to be considered a member of any Company? No indeed! He is a *vermin* and for that reason I did not wish to have him arrested and put in prison which I could have done, for his having taken away from the wardrobe of the theatre the Harlequin dress and some boy's clothes made for Miss Arnold; but I am not as bad hearted a man as I am represented. Let Mr. Tubbs pay me sixty dollars for the passage of Mrs. Tubbs and Miss Arnold and thirty eight dollars for a bill I have paid for their board in Hartford; — then I am ready to pay the forty three dollars for the week's salary left due, although that salary is forfeited. As I don't intend to trouble the public any more about such a correspondence, I will only expose that since yesterday I have been apprised that the meeting of the ringleaders was only a pretext for asking money; they had these things in view. One was to deprive me of the several sums I have

advanced the Company; the second was to put all the benefits upon the footing of an equality, and to comply with the jealousy or envy of Mr. & Mrs. Whitlock, who knew that Mr. Williamson was to have a free benefit granted for furnishing his own wardrobe and loan of books and music. Mr. Williamson was so generous as to agree to give up his right and proposed to pay the expenses of the night, but such an advantage will not be taken by me; the article shall be fulfilled.

The last intention of the meeting was to oblige me to receive Mr. Edgar back; it is for that reason they were so tenacious about not receiving any salary, unless it was paid to every one of them, consequently, to Mr. Edgar. But I would rather see an annihilation of my theatre than receive such a dangerous man, who has no other weapons but those of above.

As for Mr. Whitlock, whom I cannot leave till I have said one word about him; I will say to Mr. Whitlock that a man who stands behind the curtain is in my opinion still more despicable than Mr. Tubbs.

I would not be so severe, but I beg the public to consider that all my property, or what is more to me, the property of my wife and children is entirely involved in the undertaking. I have exerted myself since four years, with an indefatigable wish to please the public in their amusements. I have spared no money, no trouble, and have risked even my life. I take all the Company for witness that during the time they were performing at New York last fall, I went five times successively to Philadelphia, traveling night and day, and in the worst period of the plague, to settle business for the purpose of receiving the means of maintaining the Company which was losing money very fast and to keep them together for this place.

I have two projects before my eyes; a brilliant fortune should I succeed, and ruin should I not. Now I ask of every man of feeling and of those who have wives and children they adore, what it is to be done in my position, when attacked by a parcel of deceitful men? Unmask them! So, Mr. Whitlock I am not afraid of you; a man of your insignificance, good only for himself, knowing nothing but laziness and getting elevated with liquor,—will not be dreaded by the one who is industrious, sober and active for the welfare of his family.

As for what I owe to the public, I do solemnly swear that as long as I hold the property of a theatre, I shall always endeavor to improve the Company, as I have already done with the addition of eminent abilities, and conciliating principles. The alteration I am now making at the City Theatre is to have it larger, a brick building and covered with slates, with every accommodation for the Ladies and several doors for getting out. As for scenery and elegance, as I have seen every theatre in America, I hope that mine shall not be inferior to any.

Due to the performers who have dismissed themselves.

To—Mr. and Mrs. Whitlock .....Nothing
Mr. and Mrs. Edgar ..... do
Mr. and Mrs. Hughes .....Thirty-eight dollars (38.00)

Mr. and Mrs. Tubbs and Miss Arnold	Forty-three dollars	(43.00)
Mr. Downie	Seventeen dollars	(17.00)
Mr. Clough	Fourteen dollars	(14.00)
Mr. McKenzie	Fourteen dollars	(14.00)
		126.00

Advance made for passage of the performers who have dismissed themselves.

Mr. Whitlock, wife and son	80.00
Mr. and Mrs. Hughes	60.00
Mrs. Tubbs and Miss Arnold	60.00
Mr. Tubbs for bill paid	38.00
Mr. and Mrs. Edgar for advance of salaries and note due for balance of account	86.00
Mr. Downie	30.00
Mr. Clough	30.00
Mr. McKenzie	30.00
	414.00
	126.00
Sum due to Mr. Sollee	288.00

Mr. Sollee explained further the situation in a long communication, addressed to the Editors of the *City Gazette.*

Messrs. Freneau and Paine:

The behavior of Messrs. Whitlock, Edgar, Tubbs, etc., on the day of the last performance, and the hand bills they have distributed about the town, to prevent the effect of a full house which was expected; otherwise, having succeeded so far as to bring a great injury, not only against the night, but against the credit of the theatre, obliges me to come forward to expose to the public how little deserving of their favor are Mr. and Mrs. Whitlock, Messrs. Edgar, Tubbs, etc.

The complaints of the performers are that they were not paid and that they have met with indignities.

If I can prove that both assertions are not only false, but that the performers have been paid and treated as well as in any part of America, I believe that the public will consider the conduct of Whitlock and Company as an injury to the community at large, tending to deprive them of their amusements.

First, the salaries have been paid regularly, and some money, to the amount of one hundred dollars, was even advanced to some of the performers the last week. Now there is one week only, due to the performers, and I insert here the certificate of Mr. Jones which proves that he has always paid the salaries on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and even Thursday, consequently, the salaries of last week were of course, not to be paid till Wednesday of this week. But the ringleaders will say that Mr. Jones has refused to answer to pay the salaries any longer. This is true, and it is true

also, that Mr. Jones in his speech to the Company when they were meeting yesterday at three o'clock, mentioned that he was so much vexed at the ill treatment he received in the morning from the imperious Mrs. Whitlock, that he foresaw only a confusion in the Company, and swore he would have nothing more to do with the payment of the salaries, and that the money he had in his hands should be appropriated to pay the Printer's bills, amounting to nearly fifty pounds, and many other accounts which he was answerable for in his capacity of Acting Manager.

After the declaration of Mr. Jones, which was made at the rehearsal, of not paying the salaries, I received a message at half past twelve with an *order* rather than an *invitation* to appear at half past two o'clock at the Theatre, to have the salaries paid; or if not, the ring leaders would have hand bills printed about the town. I told those who delivered the message to me, that I should go to the theatre between four and five o'clock, and bring the money with me to pay those who wanted absolutely their salaries that afternoon. My exposing to them the impossibility I was in to settle anything before four o'clock on account of the General Review, which is a kind of holiday, was of no service; I was required by an arrogant note to go to the theatre at three o'clock, without even time to eat my dinner. There I found a plot entirely upon the carpet, Messrs. Whitlock and Edgar at the head, although the latter was discharged from the Company a week before, and that same performer who signed for not being paid off his salary, had more than thirty dollars paid in advance when he was discharged for having been intoxicated and unable to perform for three nights running without being hissed.

At the meeting I proposed to those who wanted instantly their salaries to pay them before the play would begin, but they said that *all* the money ought to be paid instantly, and no delay could be given. I went so far as to propose to them a security for their salaries, conditionally that they should give security for their benefits charges, and proposed to pay them the salaries of all the Company the next morning, but they were entirely determined on mischief, and having nothing to propose more, I left them to satisfy their mean and absurd determination.

However, that same President Whitlock who was so tenacious at the meeting about not receiving his salary until every one was paid could not resist the signing a full receipt for his salary, when he saw a hundred dollars presented to him before witnesses, which sum completes $1,600. That his meanness shall be punished, I have begun an action against him, not only for a breach of articles, but also for damages for having signed the handbill to the public. Should Mr. Whitlock wish to have a trial, I can show publicly, that he was trying to frighten me, by an opposition in the Charleston Theatre, merely to make me give him an extravagant salary. But this season is over for Mr. and Mrs. Whitlock; they have discharged themselves by their behavior.

Among those who have signed the hand-bills, I have been very sorry to see the name of Mr. Downie, a young gentleman who has always behaved extremely well and who deserves as much of the public as any performer. I am so much more surprised, that there

are only two days since I told him that he might set down his name for a benefit, and should he not have the expenses, I should have taken it upon myself.

The behavior of Mr. Whitlock who has left him in the mud, and that of Mr. Tubbs, who called to ask in private his salary, will probably open his eyes; and whenever he pleases to call he may be certain to be well received, because I believe he has been imposed upon.

Before I finish this long exposition, I will only make a few observations to the public.

First, I have not received a shilling this season from the receipts of the theatre.

Second, Mr. Jones, acting manager and cashier of the Company has advanced upon the profits of the house for the use of the Company, eight hundred dollars which sum is to be paid by the charges of the benefit nights. Now this week only was left before the benefits were to begin, and I could readily find money and security for the salaries.

I ask if the behavior of the performers, I have pointed out is right, when they know that the money advanced for the Company is to be paid back again?

Charleston, Feb. 27, 1798 John Sollee.

Anonymous letters besieged the press after the above appeared, and the *City Gazette and Daily Advertiser* inserted this card:

"TO CORRESPONDENTS:

No communication respecting the late misunderstanding in the theatre corps can appear in this *Gazette* unless the name of the author is left with the publishers."

Mr. Sollee's sense of the injustice of his treatment induced him to give a "Specimen of Mr. Whitlock's conduct last year."

Mr. Whitlock received in the winter of 1797, for less than five months, 4,300 dollars.

Mr. Whitlock when he came from the Northward had a pretty short passage; Mr. Jones not coming in the same vessel, had a tedious passage of thirty nine days. After Mr. Jones's arrival there was a very great difficulty of getting a license on account of the late calamity of the two fires; and the license could not be granted till the 6th of January. Mr. Whitlock asked the full amount of his salary before the plays began. amounting to about a thousand dollars, without allowing any deduction, and scarcely any time for payment. He knew that the dangers of sea are always excepted, and

that I could put in force the objection of the City Council to give a license on account of the calamity of fire, however, Mr. Whitlock was paid off every shilling; and what did he give for reward? He promised to perform in a new tragedy at the Easter Monday and Thursday evening he gave notice, he and his wife could not be ready; and that receiving no salary in Passion-Week, they were not bound to study. What was the consequence? The play, often performed, of the *School for Scandal*, was announced for the Monday, but those who had taken seats for the new play, and the public being disappointed, there was so thin an audience that the house was dismissed.

John Sollee.

Charleston, Mar. 1 —

The shameless Edgar came out with a bombastic, scurrilous, and absolutely unconvincing tirade against Mr. Sollee and some of the members of the Company. Almost an entire page of Tuesday's *Gazette* was given up to the late unpleasantness. Mr. Placide scored Mr. Edgar roundly for bringing his name into the controversy, saying that the names of actors should never be presented to the public but to announce new pleasures, and not in support of causes unworthy of them. He had carried this out to the letter in his own case — not a word appearing in the public prints about his marriage to Charlotte Wrighten and summary leave of his wife in name only, save the wedding notice.

"Mr. Whitlock's fear of offending the public by obtruding his concerns for their perusal, prevented full explanation of every transaction between himself and Mr. Sollee, but Mr. West, the original manager of the Charleston Theatre offered an engagement to Mrs. Whitlock of ten guineas a night and a benefit free of expense, but on account of the disastrous fires in Charleston in 1797, Mr. West determined not to open in Charleston for the fall season," etc.

Mr. Jones was then performing in the Boston Theatre and engaged Mr. and Mrs. Whitlock for the season

in Charleston at the City Theatre with similar agreements made as those by Mr. West. Mr. Whitlock reluctantly agreed to add his services as he had previously determined to return to the pursuit of his private profession, that of a dentist, in which he had been very successful, and it would give less fatigue, etc., etc.

As Mr. Sollee's long letter in reply answers Mr. Whitlock in full, all its salient points will be noted:

TO THE PUBLIC:

As Proprietor of the City Theatre, the value of my property depending upon the encouragement given by the citizens of Charleston, I address this piece to them, with this condition, which I am ready to submit to, that if anything I have already written, and what I now have to say against Messrs. Whitlock and Edgar is not true, that I am ready to see my theatre shut up, being not deserving of their support; but should I prove that I have been right and my antagonists wrong, I call for the contempt of the public upon them, as some vile calumniators.

Against Mr. Edgar I shall say very little only that his being of such a professed and notorious character, no satisfaction can be asked from such a man by a gentleman.

Now Mr. Whitlock, you are my Man; it is you I come to unmask, because you are employing against me, not only your characteristic hypocrisy, but also misrepresentations, which are tending to take the reputation of an honest man.

It is true the amusements could have been better forwarded by the Company, as it was before the explosion of the blackest plots, but the public will support the performers now remaining: Every one of them will certainly meet in their benefit nights, that reward they deserve for their respectful behavior towards the public in this struggle. These performers feeling that their only weakness is in their numbers, will perform but twice per week for the remainder of the season on purpose to show to the public that they are deserving of the credit they have gained. Mr. Whitlock received from me one thousand dollars, in hard dollars, for having been idle seven weeks before the theatre could open last year. As to favors, I defy Mr. Whitlock to bring any proof when I have asked of him a single favor: On the contrary if he had been a man of spirit he should have never engaged with me again, after what I told him in the yard of the play-house on the Friday of the Passion Week, concerning his deceiving not only me but the public about the tragedy of *Almeida*, which had been advertised all the Passion Week, and many seats been taken. It was in consequence of dismissing the house that evening that I told Mr. Whitlock that I should make him suffer the loss of that night and that he should not be paid the last five hundred dollars.

It is true that Mr. Whitlock has paid to Mr. Rutledge a mortgage

he had upon my land; he did it conjointly with Messrs. Jones and Placide, not by a solicitation, but a notice of interest. I am so far from depriving Mr. Whitlock of his money, I am ready to pay him tomorrow, Wednesday, not only the interest, but the same money he has advanced, etc.

John Sollee.

P. S. I confess that Mr. and Mrs. Whitlock are very good performers, but I attest that the mischief they have originated, has brought more injury to the Company, than all their merit has done good. J. S.

The members of the Company who remained to continue the season were Mr. and Mrs. Jones, Mr. and Mrs. Williamson, Mr. and Mrs. Cleveland, Mr. and Mrs. Placide, Mr. J. Jones, Mrs. Robinson, and Messrs. Nelson, Gray, and Vandeville, sufficiently good material for excellent performances, but never had the benefit season begun under more discouraging circumstances. However, a *coup de théâtre* cleared the air in the most unexpected manner.

Mr. Sollee had made a quick decision, and had been burning the midnight oil in perfecting plans to disengage himself for awhile from stage affairs, but states his financial condition for the benefit of the public:

I may venture to make public the following declaration, which, most part of the town knows as well as myself, that no man has met with more misfortunes, than I since four years. However, I have persevered with indefatigable labor, even to astonish every one who knows me. During three months to come, it will be increased still, so as to enable me to make the following bargain with my creditors to whom I owe pretty nearly 11,000 dollars. I shall ask them a rent merely sufficient for me and my wife to live upon till they are paid, which I shall do before four years with the interest of the money. The money I have received from my wife's property was 11,000 dollars, my debts amount to about the same. The interest of both sums at 7 per cent is 1,540 dollars, and I prove that I receive besides more than 2,000 dollars a year, so it shows plainly that no man has employed his property with more advantage than what I have done, in spite of all my misfortunes and my enemies.

John Sollee.

City Gazette and Daily Advertiser,
Mar. 5, 1798.

Two days later, came this:

TO THE PUBLIC:

I am happy to assure the public that I have rented for four years to Messrs. Williamson, Jones and Placide the City Theatre. The principal alterations which I am bound to make and which concern the public, are that the theatre is to be enlarged ten feet, the addition in brick and covered with slate.

The above three gentlemen with their wives having truly deserved the favor of the public, I believe that I could not make a better choice of persons, whose abilities and exertions will be always to promote the amusements of the citizens of Charleston.

As my part of the task is now over, I am happy to see that I have succeeded in my undertaking in the points I arrived at from the beginning of my labors; first to promote the amusement of the public; and put the theatre upon a footing equal to any in America; and the second to secure and improve the property of my family.

Let my enemies expend their rage and jealousy against me; I beg my creditors and my friends who were anxious about my succeeding, to judge if my speculation has been a foolish one, and what use I have made of the property I had in my hands, and if it has been risked "upon a throw of a die." Many men have their faults when young and single, but the true honest man who has a wife and children, knows that his first duty is to watch for their happiness, and has a sweeter amusement than to go to a gambling table; those places I never frequent.

By the advice of one of my intimate friends, I put the following statement to open the eyes of those who are concerned in my welfare.

Rent of the Theatre	1,200 dollars
Rent of an Assembly room with two adjacent large rooms and six rooms fronting the passage of the theatre	1,400 dollars
Four other private buildings fronting the street and two in the yard of the theatre	900 dollars
	$3,500 per anno

There is another large building out of repair which would bring me 800 dollars per annum; one year's rent would pay the alteration.

P. S. Although I have nothing at all to do in the theatre for the four years, I pledge myself to do always everything in my power to promote the success of the undertaking, and should any sacrifices be proper to be made, I give to the public my word, that although the rent of the theatre is a great object for me, I will be always ready to abandon it to support Messrs. Williamson, Jones and Placide in their undertaking; and that they will always find in me a warm advocate and true friend.

The passage from Church Street is to be entirely covered and paved. This has been the request of many ladies and will be completed for their accommodation.

Mar. 7, 1798, *City Gazette and Daily Advertiser.*

This explicit description proves with certainty the

location, first, of the French Theatre, and, later, of the Church-Street or City Theatre, as the group of buildings now known as "Cabbage Row," the Theatre having stood in the centre of the present court-yard.

This new turn of affairs, while a nine-day's wonder, seemed to give satisfaction to all and allowed Mr. Sollee to retire with dignity, and the Company to finish the season in peace.

As six of the best performers, second only to the Whitlocks, were now more vitally interested than ever in the success of the theatre under their régime, their spirits rose in the clarified atmosphere, and, with Mrs. Williamson now in undisputed lead as wife of the Senior Manager, a brilliant number of performances were given to crowded houses: *A Correspondent* expressed himself well-pleased with the prospect of "the tie between the amuser and the amused being mutual," and at Mrs. Williamson's benefit, there was "a splendid and overflowing theatre." At the end of her program after the comedy "The Child of Nature," Mrs. Williamson delivered an occasional address: "Written at her particular request, by the late Mr. Robert Burns of Scotland, the Ayrshire Bard, from his manuscript and not yet printed in his works; she also sang 'Within a mile of Edinburgh Town,' and introduced a new musical Romance never performed here, called 'The Prisoner, or the Tiny Drummer Boy'."

The other benefits introducing novelties to the Charleston stage were:

Mr. Cleveland with the comedy, "First Love, or the French Emigrant," and the Pantomime, "Travellers Preserved, or La Bonne Fille."

Mrs. Cleveland, "Americans in Algiers, or a Struggle for Freedom."

Mrs. Placide, a new comedy, "The Welsh Heiress," and a new Ballet, "The Sculptor, or the Frolic of Cupid."

Mr. Jones, "Fortune's Fool," a farce, "The Female Duellist."

Mr. Williamson, "The Merry Wives of Windsor, or Sir John Falstaff in the Buck Basket," written by Shakspeare at the command of Queen Elizabeth to exhibit the humors of the fat Knight in love, etc.

Mr. Placide, the last night this season (Mar. 31) "The Female Chevalier, or Better Late than Never," new Historic Pantomime (in 2 acts interspersed with songs and dancing, new scenery, dresses and decorations and everything that can render the spectacle brilliant), called "Telemachus in the Island of Calypso."

This ended the season's performances, and the new Managers immediately began preparations for the successful carrying out of a theatrical Triple Alliance.

PRODUCTIONS OF JOHN SOLLEE'S COMPANY — SEASON OF 1798.

Jan.	*Musical Pieces*
1 — Prelude, New Hay at the Old Market (first time here)	Musical Pieces
1 — A Cure for the Heart-ache	Children in the Woods
3 — The Dramatist	Love in a Village
5 — Alexander the Great, (first time here)	Robin Hood
8 — Bunker Hill, or the death of Gen. Warren, (first time here)	Rosina, or the Reapers
10 — The Will, (first time here)	The Adopted Child
15 — The Will, (first time here)	The Padlock
18 — Douglas, or the Noble Shepherd	The Sultan
20 — The Town before You, (first time here)	Harlequin Skeleton
22 — The Will	Peeping Tom of Coventry

24 — The Town before You	The Padlock
26 — A Cure for the Heart-ache	The Spoiled Child
27 — The Way to Get Married, (first time here)	Children in the Wood
29 — A School for Soldiers	The Romp
30 — Tancred and Sigismunda	The Wedding Day
Feb.	
1 — The Spanish Barber, (first time here)	The Agreeable Surprise
3 — The Spanish Barber	The Maid of the Oaks
5 — Isabella, or the Fatal Marriage	Harlequin Skeleton
7 — Next Door Neighbors	Inkle and Yarico
9 — How to Grow Rich	*Americania* and *Eleutheria*, Musical and Allegorical masque never yet printed or performed, by a citizen of Charleston.
12 — Wives as they were and Maids as they are	Don Juan
13 — Speculation	Don Juan
14 — A Cure for the Heart-ache	Maid of the Oaks
15 — The Carmelite	The Poor Soldier
16 — The West Indian	The Wedding Day
17 — The Will	Harlequin Gentleman
19 — Next Door Neighbors	The Spanish Barber
22 — The Country Girl	Harlequin Gentleman
24 — Fontaineville Forest	The Sicilian Romance
26 — Ways and Means	The Highland Reel
March.	
2 — The Will	Bon Ton
6 — The Child of Nature	The Prisoner, or Tiny Drummer Boy (Mrs. Williamson's benefit)
10 — First Love, or the French Emigrant	The Country Lasses (Mr. Cleveland's benefit)
13 — The Welsh Heiress	Pant. Tilia, or the Princess of Babylon (Mrs. Placide's benefit)
16 — Fortune's Fool	The Female Duellist (Mr. Jones's benefit)
21 — Merry Wives of Windsor	The Spoiled Child (Mr. Williamson's benefit)
26 — Americans in Algiers	Edgar and Emmeline (Mrs. Cleveland's benefit)
31 — Female Chevalier, or Better Late than Never	Thomas and Salley (Mr. Placide's benefit)

CHAPTER XVIII

The Charleston Comedians,
Summer Season, 1798,
Under the Management of Mr. Edgar.
Miss Arnold's Advancement as an Actress.

CHAPTER XVIII

Mr. Edgar's insatiable desire to fill the rôle of Theatrical Manager, notwithstanding his repeated failures, must have carried with the desire a certain magnetic quality, for at the tail end of every season he seemed able to gather together the remnants left over, and to provide, with the material in hand, a sufficient olla podrida to induce audiences to come out for at least a few performances, called a "Summer Season."

This time, owing to the lack of allegiance to the regular Company, he could count upon a few first-class actors, for the disaffected members of Mr. Sollee's Company remained in town until the end of the season when Mr. and Mrs. Tubbs and Miss Arnold, who had gone to Wilmington, N. C., returned, and under Mr. Edgar they formed a Company called the Charleston Comedians.

April 3, the following notice appeared:

CHARLESTON THEATRE.

The Public are most respectfully informed that this Theatre will open on Monday the 9th inst., with a New Play and other entertainments which will be made known immediately on the arrival of the performers from Wilmington, a circumstance hourly expected. This Company will henceforth be distinguished by the title of The Charleston Comedians. The present season will be very short, their intention being to act only one week previous to benefits. Their performances, they trust, will be so regularly conducted and properly arranged as never to keep their auditors later than half-past ten. The Charleston Comedians will exert themselves to give such entertainments as shall join morality with pleasure and relaxation of mind without injuring the next day's business. Subscribers to the Theatre are most respectfully requested to send for their tickets to the store of Mr. W. P. Young in Broad Street. The Company for the present short season will consist of Mr. and Mrs. Edgar; Mr. and Mrs. Whitlock; Mr. and Mrs. Hughes; Mr. and Mrs. Tubbs; and Miss Arnold: Messrs. Downie, Clough, McKenzie, Nelson, Lewis, and others.

This notice was repeated April 4th, and 6th: "Those

members of the Theatre Corps who lately made an excursion from hence to Wilmington, having returned here yesterday; the Charleston Comedians will thereby be enabled to fulfil their intention of opening the Theatre again on Monday next."

The bill was published in full on Saturday and repeated on Monday:

CHARLESTON THEATRE

By the Charleston Comedians
This evening, the 9th instant.
Will be performed a New Dramatic Piece
never acted here, called
The Prodigal
Or Innocence Preserved.

Belmour, ...Mr. Edgar
Courtney, ...Mr. Whitlock
Burgrave, ...Mr. Tubbs
Louisa, ...Mrs. Whitlock

End of the Prodigal
A Favorite Song "The Bonny Bold Soldier,"
By Mrs. Tubbs
After which will be presented, a Farce written
by the late David Garrick called
Miss in her Teens
Or, a Medley of Lovers.

Fribble, ...Mr. Tubbs
Captain Loveit, ...Mr. Downie
Puff, ...Mr. Lewis
Captain Flash, ...Mr. Edgar
Miss Biddy Bellair, ...Miss Arnold
Tag, ...Mrs. Tubbs

The whole to conclude with a Favorite After-Piece
called Three Weeks after Marriage;
Or, What We Must All Come to.

Sir Charles Racket, ...Mr. Whitlock
Old Drugger, ...Mr. Hughes
Woodley, ...Mr. Clough
Lady Racket, ...Mrs. Whitlock
Mrs. Drugger, ...Mrs. Edgar
Nancy, ...Miss Arnold
Dimity, ...Mrs. Tubbs

Boxes 5s. Pit 4s. Gall. 2s. 6d.

The doors of the Theatre will open at half past five and the performance begin at half past six.

Subscribers are requested to send for their tickets before seven in the evening to the store of Mr. W. P. Young in Broad Street

where Theatre tickets will also be sold, and by Mr. Wish at the Box office. No money will be received at the door.

Charleston Comedians.

The characters and cast will follow for this season:

Apr. 11 — Wives as they Were and Maids as they Are.

Lord Priory, ... Mr. Hughes
Sir William Dorrillon, ... Mr. Whitlock
Sir George Evelyn, ... Mr. Downie
Mr. Bronzely, ... Mr. Edgar
Mr. Norbery, ... Mr. Clough
Oliver, ... Mr. McKenzie
Nabson, ... Mr. Lewis
Miss Dorrillon, ... Mrs. Whitlock
Lady Mary Raffles, ... Mrs. Tubbs
Lady Priory, ... Mrs. Hughes

Farce — The King and the Miller of Mansfield.

King, ... Mr. Whitlock
Miller, ... Mr. Hughes
Richard, ... Mr. Edgar
Lord Lurewell, ... Mr. Downie
Courtiers, ... Messrs. Clough & Fitzgerald
Keepers, ... Messrs. McKenzie & Lewis
Joe, (with a song), ... Mr. Tubbs
Peggy, ... Mrs. Hughes
Margery, ... Mrs. Edgar
Kate, ... Mrs. Tubbs

Apr. 13 — Tragedy never acted here from the German of Frederick Schiller called,

Cabal and Love

Count Faulkner, ... Mr. Tubbs
Maj. Ferdinand Faulkner, ... Mr. Edgar
Baron Windheim, ... Mr. Downie
Muller, ... Mr. Whitlock
Worem, ... Mr. McKenzie
Servant, ... Mr. Clough
Attendants, ... Messrs. Fitzgerald & Lewis
Lady Jane Milford, ... Mrs. Edgar
Louisa, ... Mrs. Whitlock
Sophia, ... Mrs. Hughes

Farce — King and Miller of Mansfield.

King, ... Mr. Whitlock
Miller, ... Mr. Hughes
Richard, ... Mr. Edgar
Lord Lurewell, ... Mr. Downie
Courtiers, ... Messrs. Clough and Fitzgerald [New recruit]
Keepers, ... Messrs. McKenzie & Lewis
Joe, (with a song), ... Mr. Tubbs
Peggy, ... Mrs. Hughes
Margery, ... Mrs. Edgar
Kate, ... Mrs. Tubbs

Note — Gentlemen must purchase tickets before they can have a certificate for the Box.

Apr. 16 — Mrs. Whitlock's Benefit —
A New Tragedy never acted here, called
Mary Queen of Scots

Written by the Hon. John Saint John in the year 1784, and performed at Drury Lane Theatre with great applause.
New dresses, Decorations, etc.

Duke of Norfolk, ... Mr. Edgar
Earl of Shrewsbury, ... Mr. Whitlock
Earl of Huntington, ... Mr. McKenzie
Sir Arnnis Paulet, ... Mr. Wilson [New recruit]
Sir Wilbain Cecil, ... Mr. Lewis
Lord Harris, ... Mr. Clough
Davidson, ... Mr. Fitzgerald
Beton, ... Mr. Downie
Nawl, ... Mr. Powell [New recruit]
Lieutenant of the Tower, ... Mr. Hughes
Sheriff, ... Mr. Franklin [New recruit]
Queen, Mary, ... Mrs. Whitlock
Queen Elizabeth, ... Mrs. Edgar
Lady Douglas, ... Mrs. Tubbs
Lady Scroop, ... Mrs. Hughes

Song by Mrs. Tubbs
"The Passions" an Ode by Collins, delivered by Mrs. Whitlock
Farce — The Ghost, or the Dead Man Alive

Sir Jeffery Constant, ... Mr. Whitlock
Capt. Constant, ... Mr. Downie
Trusty, ... Mr. Clough
Clinch, ... Mr. Edgar
Roger, ... Mr. Hughes
Belinda, ... Mrs. Hughes
Dolly, ... Mrs. Edgar

Mrs. Whitlock having received a very elegant address to the Ladies and Gentlemen of Charleston from an unknown hand, she takes this opportunity of expressing her gratitude to the author, and informs the Public she will recite it at the end of the First Act of the Farce.

Mrs. Edgar's benefit advertized for Wednesday, April 18, had as its principal feature the tragedy of Hamlet, the part of *Hamlet* for that night only by Mrs. Whitlock, but when the day of the performance arrived:

Mrs. Edgar respectfully informs her friends and the Public that at the particular request of many Ladies and Gentlemen, she has been induced to change the Play before announced, to Mr. Sheridan's elegant Comedy of

The School for Scandal

Sir Peter Teazle, ... Mr. Hughes
Sir Oliver Surface, ... Mr. Whitlock
Joseph Surface, ... Mr. Downie
Charles, ... Mr. Edgar

Crabtree, ...Mr. McKenzie
Benjamin Backbite, ...Mr. Tubbs
Rowley, ...Mr. Lewis
Moses, ...Mr. McKenzie
Careless, ...Mr. J. Jones
Trip, ...Mr. Clough
Snake, ...Mr. Fitzgerald
Servant, ...Mr. Franklin
Lady Teazle, ...Mrs. Whitlock
Maria, ...Mrs. Hughes
Mrs. Candour, ...Mrs. Edgar
Lady Sneerwell, ...Mrs. Tubbs

After the Comedy Mrs. Whitlock delivered "The Passions," an Ode by Collins; followed with songs by Mrs. Tubbs and *Miss Arnold.*

A dissertation on Hobby Horses by Mr. Hughes, concluded, by particular desire, the very comic Farce of "Hob in the Well," with the following cast:

Sir Thomas Testy, ...Mr. Lewis
Friendly, ...Mr. Downie
Dick, ...Mr. Fitzgerald
Young Hob, ...Mr. Tubbs
Old Hob, ...Mr. Hughes
Cudgel Players, ...Mr. Tubbs, etc., etc.
Flora, (with additional songs) .....Mrs. Tubbs
Betty, ...Mrs. Hughes
Old Mrs. Hob, ...Mrs. Edgar

April 20 — Benefit Mrs. Hughes: "Who with the most profound respect begs leave to inform the Ladies and Gentlemen of Charleston and its vicinity, that the under mentioned-amusements are got up with strict propriety, and that there will be no disappointment in the music."

O'Keefe's Humorous and Elegant Comedy of The Young Quaker and the Fair American:

Young Reuben Sadboy, ...Mr. Edgar
Old Chronicle, ...Mr. Hughes
Captain Ambush, ...Mr. Downie
Splatterdash, ...Mr. McKenzie
Shadrock, ...Mr. Fitzgerald
Clod, ...Mr. Whitlock
Old Sadboy, ...Mr. Tubbs
Lounge, ...Mr. Clough
Malachi, ...Mr. J. Jones

Goliah, ...By a young Master of the city
Waiters, Bailiffs & Servants, ...By the rest of the Company
Dinah Primrose, ...Mrs. Whitlock
Lady Rounceral, ...Mrs. Edgar
Mrs. Millefleur, ...Mrs. Hughes
Pink, ...*Miss Arnold*
Araminta, (with song), ...Mrs. Tubbs

Between the Play and the Farce a Comic Interlude never performed here called

Three Old Women Weather-Wise

Goody Twitch, (with a song), ...Mr. Downie
Goody Cramp, ...Mr. Hughes
Goody Rheum, ...Mrs. Edgar

A favorite *song* by *Miss Arnold* —
To conclude with the much admired Farce,
The Old Maids

Little Miss Arnold was now appearing very often, with favorite songs, but no special mention was made of them, Mrs. Tubbs, her mother, however, was given a little notice on the day of her benefit:

"A Correspondent congratulates Mrs. Tubbs on the happy and judicious selection of the Pieces proposed for her Benefit this evening, whose novelty unites with her vocal abilities, and will furnish a just remembrance of her continual exertions to please. A crowded house must be the consequence."

Apr. 23 — Benefit Mrs. Tubbs.

The Comedy (never performed in Charleston) interspersed with songs, called

The Mysteries of the Castle:

Taken from the admired Romance of "The Mysteries of Udolpho," by Charlotte Smith, and performed upwards of fifty successive nights in London.

Carlos, ...Mr. Whitlock
Francisco, ...Mr. Hughes
Count Montoni, ...Mr. Downie
Bernado, ...Mr. Clough
Montautan, ...Mr. Nelson
Cloddy, ...Mr. J. Jones
Fisherman, ...Mr. Fitzgerald
Valoury, ...Mr. Lewis
Captain of Vessel, ...Mr. Franklin
Hilario, ...Mr. Tubbs

Julia, ...Mrs. Whitlock
Constantia, ...Mrs. Hughes
Annette, (with an additional song), ...Mrs. Tubbs
Market Lass and dances, ...*Miss Arnold*
The Bonny Bold Soldier, ...Mrs. Tubbs
A new song "Ellen, or the Richmond Primrose Girl," ..Mrs. Tubbs

The Standard of Liberty to be recited by Mrs. Whitlock. End of the Recitation Shakspeare's Glee of "Sigh No More, Ladies! Ladies Sigh No More" — Harmonized for five voices by Dr. Arne; by Mrs. Tubbs, *Miss Arnold*, Mr. Nelson, Mr. Downie and Mr. Tubbs. After which will be added the comic Opera of the "The Deserters," with the Original Overture of "Yankee Doodle" composed by M. Daguetty.

Tickets to be sold by Mr. W. P. Young, Broad Street; Mr. Wish at the Box office, and by Mrs. Tubbs at Col. Mayberry's, Cor. Elliott St. and the Bay.

Apr. 25 — Benefit Mr. Whitlock.

The Natural Son (taken from Fielding's celebrated novel of Tom Jones). The characters are finely contrasted; the Sentimental and Comic are truly in nature, and the strict manly honor of the honest Hilbernian, has never been more happily portrayed.

Sir Jeffery Latimer, ...Mr. Hughes
Blushingly, ...Mr. Downie
Rueful, ...Mr. Fitzgerald
Jack Hustings, ...Mr. Tubbs
Dump, ...Mr. McKenzie
Major O'Flaherty, ...Mr. Whitlock
Miss Phebe Latimer, ...Mrs. Edgar
Penelope, ...Mrs. Hughes
Lady Paragon, ...Mrs. Whitlock

End of the Play, a Favorite Song by
Mrs. Tubbs

After which an Epilogue on jealousy describing the various humours of the Spanish Husband, the Dutch, the French, the Italian, and John Bull the Englishman, by Mrs. Whitlock.

To which will be added a Farce called:
St. Patrick's Day,
Or the Scheming Lieutenant

O'Connor, (the Scheming Lieutenant), ...Mr. Edgar
Dr. Rosy, ...Mr. Hughes
Justice Credulous, ...Mr. Lewis
Sergeant Trounce, ...Mr. Tubbs
Corporal Flint, ...Mr. McKenzie
Soldiers, ...Messrs. Fitzgerald, Clough and Clark
Countrymen, ...Mr. Franklow and others
Bridget, ...Mrs. Edgar
Lauretta, ...Mrs. Hughes

Apr. 27 — Benefit Mr. Hughes
Last Night but Two

The celebrated Historical play in five acts. (Never performed here) and written by a citizen of the United States, called

The Death of Major André, or
West Point Preserved
Washington, (Commander-in-chief), ...Mr. Whitlock
André, Adjt.-Gen. to the British Army and
Aide-de-Camp to Gen. Clinton, ...Mr. Edgar
Green, ...Mr. Tubbs
Knox, ...Mr. J. Jones
Lafayette, ...Mr. Downie
(American Generals)
Arnold, (Commander at West Point), ...Mr. Lewis
Humphries, ...Mr. Clough
Hamilton, ...Mr. Fitzgerald
(Aides to Gen. Washington)
Robertson, (a British General), ...Mr. Tubbs
John Paulding, ...Mr. Hughes
David Williams, ...Mr. Franklin
Isaac Van Vert, ...Mr. Williams
(American Volunteers)
Officers, Guards, ...Mrs. Arnold, Mrs. Hughes
Anna, (an Attendant on Honoria), ...*Miss Arnold*
Honoria, ...Mrs. Edgar
To which will be added a Farce (never performed here) called
Like Master Like Man,
Or, The Wrangling Lovers:
The whole to conclude with the Wonderful Exploits of Mr. Salenka's Learned Dog — for this night only.

Mr. Hughes's last attraction was an early example of what later became a veritable craze for educated animals of all kinds to form a part of the extravaganza entertainments in the Theatre — Sheridan took horses and elephants to Drury Lane, and dancing dogs and performing apes, and every variety of four-footed beasts was later called in to assist in the performances.

A correspondent wrote:

Mr. Hughes's selection of entertainments this evening are certainly judicious and must highly gratify his audience. The first piece brings into view an event that engaged at that time, the attention of almost all the world. The Farce had many highly comic situations. The sagacity of Mr. Salenka's learned dog is truly astonishing, and will appear in a theatre to much greater advantage than in a room. The public will have an opportunity of gratifying their curiosity with the latter spectacle without additional expense.

Apr. 30 — CHARLESTON THEATRE
By the Charleston Comedians
The last night but one for the benefit of

Brother Tubbs and *Miss Arnold*
Will be presented the Celebrated Comedy of the
Road to Ruin

Dornton, ...Mr. Whitlock
Harry Dornton, ...Mr. Downie
Silkey, ...Mr. Hughes
Milford, ...Mr. Clough
Sulkey, ...Mr. Lewis
Smith, ...Mr. Fitzgerald
Hostler, ...Mr. McKenzie
Postilion, ...Mr. J. Jones
Jacob, ...Mr. Tubbs
Goldfinch, ...Mr. Edgar

Tradesmen and Markers by the rest of the Company

Widow Warren, ...Mrs. Edgar
Sophia, ...*Miss Arnold*
Mrs. Ledger, ...Mrs. Hughes
Jenny, ...Mrs. Tubbs

End of 4th act, by particular desire, Song of the Bonny Bold Soldier Mrs. Tubbs.

Between the play and farce Recitation in honor of Masonry by Brother Whitlock. To which will be added the comic opera of
Rosina, or the Reapers

Belville, ...Mr. Downie
Capt. Belville, ...Mr. McKenzie
Rustic, ...Mr. J. Jones
First Irishman, ...Mr. Hughes
Second Irishman, ...Mr. Clough
Reapers, ...Messrs. Fitzgerald and Lewis
Wilbain, ...Mr. Tubbs
Rosina, ...Mrs. Tubbs
Dorcas, ...Mrs. Edgar
Phoebe, ...*Miss Arnold*

A farewell address written by an American Gentlemen for, and to be spoken by, *Miss Arnold.*

The whole to conclude (by particular desire and positively the last night) with the Wonderful Exploits of the Learned Dog.

Tickets may be had of Mr. Wish at the Box office, and of Mr. Tubbs and *Miss Arnold* at Col. Mayberry's Cor. Elliott and the Bay, etc.

May 2 — Benefit Mr. Edgar.

Jones's celebrated Tragedy of
The Earl of Essex
Or, The Unhappy Favorite

Earl of Essex, ...Mr. Edgar
Earl of Southampton, ...Mr. Whitlock
Lord Burleigh, ...Mr. Downie
Sir Walter Raleigh, ...Mr. McKenzie
Lieutenant of the Tower, ...Mr. Clough

Lords, Ladies and attendants by the rest of the Company

Queen Elizabeth, ...Mrs. Edgar

Countess of Nottingham, ...Mrs. Tubbs
Countess of Rutland, ...Mrs. Whitlock

Between the Play and Farce will be delivered a Poetic address never spoken here called

The Love of Fame, by Mrs. Hughes
A favorite new song by Mrs. Tubbs

Between the acts of the Farce, Mrs. Whitlock will deliver the address on Jealousy.

To which will be added an entire new farce called
The Man of Enterprise

Written by Charles Shillto and performed in London and Norwich with great applause.

Old Rivet, ...Mr. Hughes
Jeff Rivet, ...Mr. Edgar
Junk, ...Mr. Tubbs
Prolix, ...Mr. J. Jones
Ackland, ...Mr. Clough
Coachman, ...Mr. Lewis
Servant, ...Mr. Fitzgerald
Harriot, ...Mrs. Hughes
Mrs. Olive, ...Mrs. Edgar
Gillet, ...Mrs. Tubbs

The only criticism given of any of these performances was the brief notice of Mrs. Tubbs's evening and of Mrs. Whitlock's address. Not a line of comment follows this final performance of the Charleston Comedians and the only public notice they received was from the advertized bills, but this was probably Mr. Edgar's most successful season, and the advancing career of *Miss Arnold* is here first emphasized.

The *Eastern Herald* speaking of an entertainment given in Portland, Maine, in December, 1796, referred to "the beautiful Miss Arnold whose powers as an actress command admiration;" this was an entertainment given there by Mr. and Mrs. Tubbs. The year of the birth of Miss Arnold seems to have been 1787, as in 1797 when she was announced to take the part of *Little Pickle,* with songs at her Mother's benefit performance at Newport, she was said to be a girl of ten years. She had made her début in the same place as *Solomon*

Smack in "Trick upon Trick," April 5, 1796. "Mr. and Mrs. Tubbs assisted by Miss Arnold gave a reading and concert in Newport on May 2d, which they called 'Oddities after the manner of Dibdin' at Mrs. Penrose's Hall in Church Street. Mr. Tubbs played the accompaniment on the piano for the songs of Mrs. Tubbs and Miss Arnold."[1]

Miss Arnold first appeared in Charleston at the City Theatre November 18, 1797, in a song called "The Market Lass," and appeared this season in a few childish characters, notably as the *Duke of York* in Richard the Third. In 1798 she was one of a group of dancing nymphs, and was *Cupid* in a ballet-pantomime, and *Julia* (Ferrand's child) in "The Sicilian Romance," and sang one or two duets with her mother.

This summer season of the Charleston Comedians first brought her forward as an actress, and the parts she played were: *Miss Biddy Bellair* in "Miss in Her Teens," *Nancy* in "Three weeks after Marriage," *Pink* in "The Young Quaker and Fair American," *Sophia* in "The Road to Ruin," and *Pheobe* in "The Reapers," and she delivered a farewell address especially written for her, at the Benefit of Mr. Tubbs and herself.

At her Mother's benefit she appeared as the *Market Lass* and *Dancer*; and during this season sang a number of times between acts. This constitutes her real first season as an actress, and was the crowning achievement of the Charleston Comedians.

The new plays given at this time were: "The Prodigal," "Cabal and Love," "Mary Queen of Scots," "The

[1] "History of the American Theatre," G. O. Seilhamer.

Old Women Weather-Wise," "Mysteries of the Castle," "The Death of Major André, or West Point Preserved," "Like Master Like Man," and "A Man of Enterprise."

CHAPTER XIX

City Theatre
Winter Season — 1799.

An Occasional Fête, Called Charleston's Celebration,
or The Happy Return
Commemorating the Home-Coming of Major-General
Pinckney, Minister Plenipotentiary to France.
Occasional Address by Mr. Beresford of this City De-
livered by Mrs. Williamson at the
Orphan House Benefit.
An Epilogue at the final Performance by a Gentleman
of this City.
The Comedy Secrets Worth Knowing, Performed here
The First Time in America.
The Pantomime Harlequin's Family, or Conjugal Love
Performed for the First Time in America.
And Ten Popular Plays Performed
for the First Time in Charleston.

CHAPTER XIX

After Mr. Sollee resigned the management of the City Theatre in favor of Messrs. Williamson, Jones, and Placide, the latter had to cast about for a new company, the interchange instituted by Mr. Sollee between Charleston and Boston not being in force with the new management.

There was no fall engagement, and it was not until January 9, 1799, that the first announcement appeared, naming only those members of Mr. Sollee's company who had held together after the secession of Messrs. Whitlock, Edgar, Tubbs, et al, in April, 1798, and five new members — Mons. and Madame Lege, and Messrs. Ryder, Davis and Solomon.

As soon as the "Charleston Comedians" vacated the Charleston Theatre it was leased as a Seminary for young men — "where all the Sciences and Languages which constitute a complete and liberal education will be taught according to the most approved methods".... with Dr. Gallaher, head of the Classical Department and Dr. Purcell, superintending Latin and English Grammar, and assistants in every branch of education. [1]

This occupancy did not last long, and the Theatre soon regained its original use.

Although the Charleston Theatre was superior in every way to the City Theatre, its Managers and owners were not so alert or so ambitious as those of the latter, which seemed, to use a slang expression, "to have the call," until 1800, when it was continuously occupied for a dozen years by Mr. Placide's Stock Company.

1 *City Gazette and Daily Advertiser*, May 29, 1798.

Three strong men were now at the head of the City Theatre, and all of them actors of some distinction and Managers of experience. Management of a theatre by a group of the chief actors of a company was the custom in France in the time of Molière as it was in England in Shakspeare's day, and still continues in France.

Messrs. Williamson, Jones, and Placide were well known to one another, all of them having been associated in previous companies, and lately at Boston.[1] Mr. Placide had rocked the cradle, so to speak, of the first timid child of the Muses in the later "Hub" where he assisted in the opening performances in Broad Alley, of the New Exhibition Room under the management of Mr. Harper of the Old American Company, August and September, 1792; where he gave twelve pantomime and dancing performances, which were very popular. In the spring of 1793 Mr. Placide purchased a large brick building in Newport and turned it into a Playhouse, inaugurating the theatre there, and this building acted in this capacity for fifty years as the Newport Theatre, lasting until 1842. In 1794 Mr. Placide was one of the original company of the French Theatre in Charleston, and its principal dancer and pantomime-director as well as its Manager. He was Proprietor and Manager of a most successful Vauxhall Garden in Charleston, which for many years was maintained during the summer and fall months.

John B. Williamson made his first appearance in America at the Boston Haymarket in 1796. At the London Haymarket, where he first appeared in 1783,

[1] The slight sketches here given of Messrs. Williamson, Jones, and Placide were culled from "History of the American Theatre," by G. O. Seilhamer, and from the South Carolina *Gazettes*.

he was said to be a great favorite but his popularity in America was somewhat dimmed by his habit, according to American testimony, of over-valuing everything in the old country and under-estimating everything in the new. The year after his début in Boston he became manager of the theatre where he appeared. In this company Mr. and Mrs. Jones were with him, and to him belongs the distinction of inaugurating in America the "Star-system" when he engaged Mrs. Whitlock for twelve special performances during this season. His wife was acknowledged to be one of the most fascinating, beautiful, and versatile actresses ever seen in America.

Mr. and Mrs. Jones first played at the Boston Theatre, season 1794-6, under Charles Stuart Powell. He was inimitable in top comedy, playing many Shakspearian rôles of his class to perfection, rejoicing in the medley of bombast and buffoonery, and made a special reputation in his characterization of *Bob Acres* in "The Rivals," and was known as a man of the sweetest, most humane disposition. He was later Manager of the Boston Theatre.

Mrs. Jones was an acceptable actress, well-studied in her art and able to take Shakspearian rôles with credit.

Lailson's Circus, "with elaborate equestrian feats and Tournaments:" Exhibitions of the Elephant — "a Stupendous Beast;" the wonderful set of clocks and "automatons, just arrived from Germany;" "Mr. Fontini, lately delighting audiences in Rome, Naples and Venice, with his performances by twelve children;" and the St. Cecilia Concerts, were all rivals for pat-

ronage in the amusement line, when the Theatre swung open its doors with the following announcement:

The City Theatre, after undergoing an extensive alteration, being considerably enlarged and beautified, surrounded by a brick wall, and secured by a Terrace on each side of the roof, will be submitted to the Public's liberal patronage, under the direction of Messrs. Williamson, Jones and Placide, who with the utmost deference beg leave to announce its opening this evening, the 11th instant, with the very popular comedy of "The Will;" a comic Ballet-Dance under the direction of Mons. Lege, called the "Two Hunters and the Milk Maid;" the principal characters by Mons. Lege, (being his first appearance on this stage) and Mrs. Placide, followed by the Opera of "The Old Soldier."

Mons. Lege, a French Dancer-Pantomimist, made his first appearance in America as *Cola* with the Philadelphia Company, 1795-6, with a salary of four guineas a week, featuring an "Egyptian Festival."

Madame Lege joined him in Charleston a few evenings after the opening performance.

A "Correspondent," dilating upon social pleasures, Balls, Concerts, etc., believes — "That Charleston is now the gayest place and most attractive city of the United States. And now again the stage, which, it is pleasing to observe, is likely to afford attractions at least equal to those of former seasons."

Music and dancing formed a large part of the second performance — fancy-dances galore, solos, duets, etc., and Military Evolutions, a Grand Indian dance by Mons. Lege; a Creole *pas-seul* by Madam Lege, and *Minuet de la Cour* by Mr. and Mrs. Placide.

"Twinkling toes have ever been given more adulation than prodigious brains," and Louis XIV, who was a famous dancer himself, said, "he who dances well makes a long step in love;" and it was the grace of Alexander Placide in the intricate dances which were so largely a part of him that first intrigued the youthful Charlotte

Wrighten, and she was soon stepping to the lively tunes along with him adown life's paths, and never seemed to regret her choice. A Ballet was danced before England's monarch, and Francis the First of France at Ardres in 1520, on the Field of the Cloth of Gold; and it is safe to assume that no pictures which transport the beholder into the heart of poetry are more potent than the poetry of motion.

To keep themselves physically fit, the gentlemen of these days not only included boxing and fencing as a part of their education, but, to keep in perfect form, they had daily exercises from the Manual of Arms.

All actors could perform feats of agility, and had sham-fights with shields and broadswords; these exercises of skill and dexterity were greatly enjoyed by the men of the audience, and were introduced wherever they would fit in.

On January 23, "The Battle of Hexham, or Days of Old," started with a grand fight between officers belonging to different parties, and shields and broadswords were used by Messieurs Lege and Placide.

Two nights later, January 25, the new managers brought to the stage a —

New Popular Comedy never performed on this Continent, and received in London with unbounded applause, called "Secrets Worth Knowing," with the following cast:

Greville, ...Mr. Cleveland
Edgerton, ...Mr. King
(being his first appearance on any Stage)
Rostrum, ...Mr. Jones
Undermine, ...Mr. Hughes
April, ...Mr. Williamson
Blethore, ...Mr. Barnard
Nicholas, ...Mr. J. Jones
Valet, ...Mr. Ryder
Cook, ...Mr. Solomon
Coachman, ...Mr. Davis
Mrs. Greville, ...Mrs. Jones

Rose Sydney, ...Mrs. Hughes
Sally, ...Mrs. Williamson

The company was now augmented to eighteen members; and the first of February the favorite "West Indian" was followed by "The Sultan, or A Peep into the Seraglio," with a great flourish of trumpets and marvelous things introduced in the entertainments given to the Grand Sultan by *Roxalana;* there were weird songs and dances and a grand procession from the Seraglio of the Janissaries with Turkish music. Turks, Arabs, Beduins, Egyptians, and Syrians mingled in the throng, and, as color came out of the East, it was a riotous exhibition of brilliant head-dresses, spangled draperies, and enveloping yashmaks, that met the gaze of the delighted audience, who had pored over the elaborate descriptions of each scene that appeared in the morning's paper.

There were so many pleasures afoot in the city at this time that something compelling attention had to be produced at the theatre to tilt the see-saw of popularity back to the Thespians.

The managers were striving to get their full complement of actors, and on February 11 it was stated: "Our theatrical amusements are likely soon to receive a considerable augmentation, ... Mr. Taylor, whose dramatic reputation stands so high to the northward, is, we understand, arrived in Charleston," etc.

"The Merchant of Venice" was played February 4, with Mr. Williamson as *Shylock,* Mrs. Williamson as *Portia,* Mr. Ryder as *Lorenzo,* and Mrs. Placide as *Jessica.*

From the very beginning of theatrical activities of

this city, a strong local coloring was apparent, beginning with Prologues and Epilogues by Charlestonians; plays and songs and pantomimes of local origin; and every civic or historical event of importance to the citizens was celebrated by the players, and there were strong ties of community interest binding them together.

Major-General Pinckney had been sent as the American representative to France to cast oil on the troubled waters of the time and to establish if possible an entente-cordiale between the two nations. Although the United States' representative "was received with very haughty demeanor," he departed with the esteem and respect of the people. His home-coming to Charleston on February 5 was celebrated with elaborate welcoming festivities.

The actors had been preparing for this event for some weeks, as had the whole of Charleston. The shops were filled with American cockades surmounted with the American Spread-eagle, and the *Gazettes* contained illustrations showing them in gold, silver or gilt, and it is safe to say that manly breasts wore this decoration in honor of the returned statesman.

The actors' quota of homage to the distinguished diplomatist took the form of a theatrical Festival or Vaudeville show of dances, patriotic songs, dialogues, speeches, and a march composed by Mons. Foucard, one of the orchestra-players. The programme follows:

A New Occasional Fête consisting of Dancing, Dialogue and song called:

Charleston's Celebration, or the
Happy Return.
With new Scenery, Machinery, Dresses and Decorations.

Cast —

Major-General, ...Mr. Williamson
American Officers, ...Messrs. Cleveland, Hughes, Ryder, etc.
Painter, ...Mr. Solomon
Indian Chiefs, ...Messrs. Placide and Lege
Maimed Soldier, ...Mr. Jones
Genius of America, ...Mrs. Cleveland
Pallas, ...Mrs. Placide
Liberty (with a song), ...Mrs. Williamson
American Ladies, ...Mrs. Jones, Mrs. Hughes, Madame Lege and Mrs. Robinson

In the course of the celebration will be performed a new March entitled

General Pinckney's March,
Composed by Mons. Foucard.
The whole to conclude by a grand general
Garland Dance

In which will be displayed the leading Patriots of America, with their attributes.

Lailson's Circus was running full-column advertisements, offering dramatic and spectacular inducements, Pantomimes and Equestrian feats, and announced its intention of remaining in the city until after the Jockey-Club Races, which would begin February 13. This formidable rival kept the theatre management awake at night trying to offset its attractions.

Mr. Taylor, the new member of the company, made his first appearance here in the character of *Octavian* in "The Mountaineers." He had made his first American appearance at the Boston Theatre as one of Mr. Powell's English recruits for the season of 1794-5, playing *Orlando* in "As You Like It," and it was said that he eclipsed every competitor, and it was generally admitted that he was in the front rank of genteel comedy.[1]

The Races were on! Everything and everybody was a-quiver with excitement; all amusements running full-

1 "History of the American Theatre" — G. O. Seilhamer.

tilt and the Gentlemen of the Turf were the heroes of the hour.

One of the features of the Grand Pantomime, "Don Juan," February 18, was "An Equestrian Statue." Mr. Lailson of the circus announced next day: "'The Pedestal, or the Equestrian Statue'," performed by a *Real* Horse."

A "Female Jockey" had several articles in the papers objecting to Turf-Taxation:

There are four of us, my old Aunt, two marriageable sisters and my maiden self. We ride to the Jockey-ground in our family coach every day during the Races, but we do mortally hate to pay anything for it. Conceive, then, our indignation at the new turf-tax on coaches. Think what a rage we are in with the Stewards of the Jockey Club..... I ache all over every time I think of it. What! convert Women into Ways and Means for Men, from the mere sportive production of creative fancy?..... I know their subscriptions are liberal and their purses heavy, but by what right have they to enlarge their sweep-stakes by *our* means?..... Ye Gods! over what a precipice of despotism and prodigality are we passing. To impose taxation on amusements that have hitherto been *free* for everyone to enjoy!

General Washington's Birthday was the next celebration, beginning with the toast — "May the tree of liberty be planted in the centre of the earth and its branches extend from pole to pole."

The American Revolution Society was entertaining the State Society of The Cincinnati at dinner at Mrs. Daniel's Long Room in Church Street, and they were to repair to the theatre in the evening to witness

The new Pantomime, interspersed with Dance and Song, analagous of the day, called:

"The Birthday of General G. Washington, or the Triumph of Virtue."

Characters of the Prologue

America, ...Mrs. Placide
Minerva, ...Mrs. Jones
Themis, ...Madame Lege
Bellona, ...Mrs. Cleveland
Goddess of Humanity, ...Mrs. Robinson
Goddess of Benevolence, ...Mrs. Hughes
Liberty, ...Mrs. Williamson

A Grand Ballet will follow, in the course of which the picture of General Washington will be displayed; and all the Company in conclusion will join in a general Garland Dance.

Mr. Williamson, who was a French and Spanish Scholar with literary tastes, had translated a number of plays from these languages, and two years before, his popular edition of "The Spanish Barber" had been played here, having been taken from Beaumarchais' French original, and this sprightly comedy "enhanced" (?) by interpolations of current song was the main attraction on February 25. Early audiences demanded quantity as well as quality, and these interspersed songs and dances necessitated quite a strong hold of the thread of continuity to enable them at the close to switch back their minds to where the first break occurred. Mr. Lailson's very fine circus attractions (arranged in the bills as to be almost identical with the theatrical offerings) were such a thorn in the flesh that the theatre managers resorted to diplomacy, and engaged Mr. Lailson and his daughter to join the company for the spectacular portions of their productions. It was announced that "Mr. Lailson will perform a principal character in the heroic pantomime 'Oscar and Malvina,' now in preparation."

Many French players had joined the company by this time, and a revival of French pantomimes was quite noticeable. These French players had, after their first season in Charleston, gone North and had given in other companies the same selections they had played here, and now a number of them were returning.

Elaborate preparations were made for the reintroduction of "La Belle Dorothée," with Mrs. Placide in the title-rôle. This pantomime was in four acts, with

many spectacular features, the burning funeral pile being one of them, which always raised the audience to a high state of emotionalism. Mons. Lege played opposite Mrs. Placide in all the French pantomimes. The audience probably speculated upon the feelings of Mr. Placide in the renewal of this piece, because when it was previously acted in Charleston "*Madame* Placide" was *la belle Dorothée,* taking the identical parts now assumed by *Mrs.* Placide. However, the pantomime was preceded by "The Waters of Oblivion," and Mr. Placide had no doubt bathed therein; he had once said, "No player's name should ever be mentioned in the public prints, save to suggest pleasure, and the least said about an actor's private life the better."

Mr. and Mrs. Jones took the leading characters in "The Busybody" on March 1, and in the pantomime following, "Oscar and Malvina, or the Hall of Fingal," Mr. Lailson was *Oscar* and Mrs. Williamson *Malvina. Oscar's* leap from the turrets of a prodigiously high tower into the arms of his soldiers was a thrilling finale, even more exciting than the beautiful "Feast of Shells" preceding it.

The introduction of a fourth new play for the benefit of Mrs. Jones marked March 8 at the City Theatre; it was "The Pilgrim, or Whim and Madness," a Drury-Lane comedy that had been received with universal applause.

"A Touch of the Times," a new song, was introduced by Mr. Jones, its other name, "Brother Jonathan's Determination," showed it to be American, as "A New Patriotic Song never sung here before, called 'The Green Mountain Farmer, or Washington and Victory'."

For the musical farce, "The Farmer," and the representation of the "Naval Engagement between Admiral Nelson and the French Fleet at the Mouth of the Nile," Mons. Audin had painted a new set of scenes "expressly for this occasion," March 11.

A reward of fifty dollars was offered for the apprehension of "Traders of Surreptitious checks of Admission to the Theatre sold at an under-price," etc.

Performances had been running three times a week since the beginning of the season, and every night as usual during Race Week.

As soon as the Benefits began, the bills were noticeably lengthened, and the best members of the company turned longing eyes to the more commodious theatre; moreover an accident of minor importance had occurred at the Church-Street Theatre which necessitated some repair work.

The Charleston Theatre had been a haven and a shelter from its earliest days, and whenever the City Theatre got into trouble the Charleston Theatre came to the rescue, and even now, though used as a seminary, the auditorium was available.

Mrs. Williamson, as wife of the senior manager, was to have the first benefit there. Her personal announcement follows:

CITY THEATRE, MARCH 11, 1799.

Mrs. Williamson with most respectful deference begs leave to inform the Ladies and Gentlemen intending to honor her by their patronage, and the public in general, that her benefit night announced for this evening at the Theatre in Church Street is postponed until Wednesday next, 13th instant, when by advice of many respectable friends the performance will be removed to the Charleston Theatre, Broad Street, where she humbly hopes for a continuance of that favor which has invariably accompanied her professional exertions in Charleston, and forms the pride and pleasure of her life.

This benefit introduced to Charleston a new comedy in five acts, called "The Stranger," performed in London, Liverpool, Philadelphia, New York, and Boston, with the most brilliant success. Mrs. Williamson sang, "by particular desire," the favorite Scots Songs, "Within a Mile of Edinburgh-Town," and "The Soldier Tired of War's Alarms," with grand orchestra accompaniment led by Mr. Bellinger.

The Ballet, "Cupid's Frolic," included among the dancers Miss Lailson, as *Cupid,* and Mrs. Cleveland's little girl, both of whom had small parts also in the comedy.

The new comedy, "The Stranger," had such a cordial reception that it was repeated for Mr. Williamson's benefit.

This criticism appeared after its first performance:

The comedy of "The Stranger" performed on Thursday evening to one of the most crowded and brilliant audiences ever remembered, was received through-out with the most distinguished marks of approbation and still sincerer applause of filling many a bright eye with the drops of heart-adoring sympathy; so general has been the wish to have this charming play repeated, that Mr. Williamson, anxious to accommodate the public taste has announced it this evening for his benefit, etc.

After the quiet of Passion Week, Mrs. Placide's elaborate programme for Easter Monday evening was read with avidity by theatre-goers; and such an array of attractions was set forth as took almost a column and a half of the *Gazette* to describe, and it appeared three times.

As his young wife's Bill was undoubtedly arranged by Mr. Placide, he spared no pains, begrudged no space given to minute details of performances. This Benefit included: "A Celebrated new comedy in five acts, called 'He's Much to Blame, or The Prodigal Re-

claimed,' 'The Beggars' Petition,' also new; concluding with a splendid Historical Pantomime, 'The Man in the Iron Mask,' etc. The scene which represents the interior of the Bastille is painted new for the occasion from a drawing taken from the original."

Mrs. Cleveland's Benefit included the new comedy, "Life's Vagaries, or the Ups and Downs of Fortune," a new *divertissement* called "Wags and Oddities," and the celebrated Romance, "The Enchanted Wood." Mrs. Placide was more in evidence in this evening's performance than anyone else, taking the part of *Lady Torrendale* in the new comedy, the role of *Una* in "The Enchanted Wood," singing in "Wags and Oddities;" dancing with the new Ballet-leader, Mons. Lege, in the Pas-de-Deux, and joining with Mons. Lege and Mrs. Cleveland in a "Triple Allemande."

Having had the veil of the future lifted for us concerning this young woman's life — seeing her as the mother of a celebrated family of actors, having made her theatrical début in Charleston in the same company with her distinguished mother, Mrs. Pownall, in 1795, and, after her marriage, living in this city and rearing her children here, and becoming a Star in her husband's Stock Company—her rising popularity and advancing abilities are of concern as largely a Charleston production.[1]

A well-meaning correspondent, "Philanthropon," probably missed the mark aimed at by calling the public's attention to Mrs. Robinson's benefit thus:

"Whoever recollects her former exertions and first

1 Steel engraving portraits of her sons Henry and Thomas Placide, as the Two Dromios, may be seen in the volume of Comedies in Charles Knights' Complete Works of Shakspeare, illustrated with steel engravings of celebrated American Actors.

rate theatrical abilities in the gay day of youth and spirits (when Mrs. Ryan) with her continued attempt to please, will contribute their mite to render the evening of her days easy. A generous public will not omit the opportunity of gratifying their feelings by 'smoothing the rugged path of life's decay'."

Mrs. Robinson was probably a little over fifty years of age, filling suitable rôles in a perfectly satisfactory manner, and was no doubt indignant at the publicity method adopted by her would-be helper.

The sordid-sounding title of the first part of Mons. Lege's benefit would certainly not have appealed to a representative audience anywhere — "The German Hotel, or Villainy its Own Scourge" — but the gallery may have been amused, and the second part of the programme may have atoned for the former, for the magic of the name of Richard Cœur de Lion always made a strong appeal.

When it was advertized that the lively Mrs. Williamson was to play *Sir Harry Wildair,* "being her first appearance in America in the character," Mr. Jones's benefit, in which it was to be given, scored an immediate rise in popularity. This bonny favorite in a "breeches-part" added to Mr. Jones's own strong hold on the community's affections — all of them having laughed with him now for several years — looked forward eagerly to his new comic song, "What a Woman is Like," and the evening's performances wound up in rollicking fun.

"Brother Hughes's" benefit was a Masonic night. "The Man of Ten Thousand" being followed by "A Masonic Festival," by Brother Collins, and a comic Masonic song

by Brother Jones, introduced Solomon's Temple adorned with the whole paraphernalia of a lodge, with master-officers and brethren "properly cloathed," the company being assisted by Masons of the city. On closing of the Temple, "The Secret Discovered," in the character of a Mason's wife, by Mrs. Williamson — and the "Ancient and Honorable" from all over the city adding to the box receipts.

A new play was offered at almost every benefit, and the *Gazette* had this to say of Mr. Cleveland's choice:

"The play of 'The Monk,' is one of the most celebrated productions of the day; the great reputation of the romance from which it is taken united to its own merit, rendered it so great an attraction as to engross the public of London for four months, during which time it was constantly played to crowded houses."

All the players had individual friends in the city who always came forward at stated times — especially at benefits — to speak, each for his own. A note of disappointment is heard from Mr. Cleveland's Champion:

> One is born with a silver spoon in his mouth, another with a wooden ladle — none can witness the truth of this homely saying better than those who depend on public favor for support. Every one will admit Mrs. Cleveland has performed the parts allotted her with strict correctness and propriety and every one assents to her amiableness.....and that she deserved well of the public,..... yet if report says true, the house at her benefit did not contain the amount of the night's expenses..... If this failure has been cause of regret to her friends and the public, they have an opportunity this evening of lessening that regret by affording to the husband, the father, the gentleman, and certainly one of the best performers of the season, the patronage which the amiable wife and mother failed of.

The Charleston Stock Companies became part and parcel of the community, and their interests were well looked after by the citizens.

Mr. Cleveland's benefit was no doubt a success after

this appeal. A number of the new songs of the day were introduced between the acts — "The Little Waist," sung by Mrs. Williamson; the "Federal Constitution Boys, or Washington Forever," by Mr. Jones — and dainty songs introduced during the pantomime of "Echo and Narcissus."

The perennial favorite, "As You Like It," opened Mrs. Placide's benefit, with Mr. Taylor as *Orlando* and Mrs. Williamson as *Rosalind* —

For that night only, Mr. Placide will return to his original profession of dancing on the Tight Rope, giving various feats of equilibrium, playing on the violin in different ways — and the introduction of an entirely new pantomime never performed in America with new scenery, dresses, decorations and metamorphoses, called "The Family of Harlequin, or Conjugal Love;" and Mr. Placide respectfully informs the public that he has neglected no expense to render the last scene of the pantomime one of the most brilliant that has ever yet appeared.

West and Bignall had given a yearly benefit for the Orphan House, but the City Theatre had never done so. The new management of this institution, however, tendered it this year on April 12 — when Mrs. Williamson delivered an Occasional Address written by Mr. Beresford of this city. This Epilogue was printed in the South Carolina *Gazette* of April 17.

A Theatric Communication appeared the day of Mr. Taylor's benefit, setting forth the subjects of his choice:

Mr. Taylor's benefit announced for this evening offers to the dramatic epicure one of the richest banquets this season has offered. Mr. Cleveland's acknowledged excellence in "The Stranger," and Mrs. Williamson's pathetic and impressive acting in *Mrs. Smith*, scarcely admits a parallel in the Charleston Theatre. When we see "The Mountaineers" with Mr. Taylor's *Octavian*, Mrs. Williamson's *Agnes*, and Mr. Jones's *Sadi*, we must allow Mr. Taylor to be a judicious caterer.

"The German Horrors," as one critic described the melodramas that had recently reached America, with highly spiced excitement, deeds of violence, and coarse

realism, had arrived at the Charleston Theatre with "The Castle Spectre" as *the pièce de résistance* for Mr. Jones's benefit. This pleasant verse was put at the head of the evening's bill:

> "And oh! the wretch whom hopeless woes oppress
> Whose days no joys, whose nights no slumbers bless
> When pale despair alarms the frenzied eye
> Screams in thine ear, and bids thee Heaven deny," etc.

Mr. Lewis's play of "The Castle Spectre" is one of those performances which by novelty if not complete originality attracts universal attention. And though the critics have railed most outrageously against his ghost, his black-a-Moor's leaps from castle windows, fat friars in bed and lean fathers in cellars; — the public have attended, laughed and cried without appearing to be wearied.

Mrs. Placide was *Evalina, the Spectre,* Mr. Taylor *Kenric,* and Mr. Cleveland *Percy.*

The last night of the season had arrived, and the last performance was for Mr. Mayberry: "The Castle Spectre" was repeated, followed by "The Sicilian Romance" and an Epilogue by a young gentleman of the city.

Thirty-nine performances were given by this company in comedy and tragedy, and thirty-nine operas and pantomimes; thirteen new plays for the first time in Charleston, and twelve new actors and actresses made their first appearance here during this season.

Mrs. Placide had appeared before the footlights the greatest number of times — sixty-one — taking many of the leading rôles and acknowledged as the *première danseuse.*

Two new pieces, which had not before been given in America, appeared this season — "Secrets Worth Knowing," and the pantomime, "Conjugal Love" — and ten plays were given for the first time in Charleston. Messrs. Davis, Solomon, Barnard, King, Cardinan, Robler, and Mourgy made their first theatrical appearances on the

Charleston Stage, and Mons. and Madame Lege, dancers and pantomimists, played here for the first time, as did also Mr. Ryder, Mr. Collins, and Mr. and Miss Lailson, the two last named having come over from the Circus where pantomimes had been enacted several months before the opening of the theatre.

PERFORMANCES CITY THEATRE, WINTER SEASON, 1799; MESSRS. WILLIAMSON, JONES AND PLACIDE.

1799	*Comedies and Tragedies*	*Pantomimes, Operas, and Ballets*
Jan.		
11	The Will	The Two Hunters — The Poor Soldier
14	Cheap Living (1st time here)	Village Sports — Virgin Unmasked
18	Cheap Living	Mirza and Lindor — Grand Concert and Ballet
21	Cure for the Heartache	Two Quakers — Rosina
23	Battle of Hexham (1st time here)	Dance by Mr. Lege — The Romp
25	Secrets Worth Knowing (1st time here)	The Bird Catcher — Bon Ton
28	Way to Get Married	The Cooper, The Spoiled Child
February		
1	The West Indian	The Sultan — Turkish Dances
4	The Merchant of Venice	La Forêt Noire
6	The Will	Two Hunters and the Milk Maid The Lying Valet
9	The Highland Reel	Fête in honor of the return from France of Major-General Pinckney "The Charleston Celebration, or The Happy Return."
11	The Mountaineers	The Modern Antiques, or the Two Merry Mourners
13	Secrets Worth Knowing	Village Sports — The Wedding Day
14	Bunker Hill	No Song, No Supper
15	The Mountaineers	The Sultan: Bucks Have at Ye All
16	A Cure for the Heartache	The Cooper: Rosina
18	The Dramatist	Don Juan, or the Libertine Destroyed
20	Next Door Neighbors	La Belle Dorothée
22	Next Door Neighbors	The Deuce is in Him, and New Pantomime, The Birth Day of General G. Washington
25	Wives as They Were and Maids as They Are	The Spanish Barber
27	The Mountaineers	La Belle Dorothée

Comedies and Tragedies	*Pantomimes, Operas, and Ballets*
March	
1 — The Busybody	Oscar and Malvina
4 — The Country Girl	Oscar and Malvina
6 — The Midnight Hour	The Old Soldier — The Purse
8 — The Pilgrim, Mrs. Jones's Benefit) (1st time here)	The Farmer, Naval Engagement between Lord Nelson and the French Fleet
13 — The Stranger, (Mrs. Williamson's Benefit) (1st time here)	Cupid's Frolic — The Padlock
16 — The Stranger, (Mr. Williamson's benefit)	Oscar and Malvina
25 — He's Much to Blame (Mrs. Placide's benefit) (1st time here)	The Man With the Iron Mask
27 — Life's Vagaries	Wags and Oddities — The Enchanted Wood, (Mrs. Cleveland's benefit)
30 — Hamlet	The Death of Captain Cook, (Benefit Mr. Robinson and Mr. Solomon)
April	
1 — The German Hotel, or Villainy Its Own Scourge	Richard the Lion Hearted, (Benefit Mons. Lege)
3 — The Constant Couple	The Quaker, (Mr. Jones's Benefit)
5 — The Man of Ten Thousand	A Masonic Festival — Irishman in London (Mr. Hughes's Benefit)
8 — The Monk, or the Ruins of Paluzzi	Echo and Narcissus, (Benefit Mr. Cleveland)
10 — As You Like It	Family of Harlequin, or Conjugal Love, (Mr. Placide's Benefit)
12 — Secrets Worth Knowing	The Spoiled Child, (Orphan-House Benefit)
15 — The Stranger — Bucks Have At Ye All	The Mountaineers, (Mr. Taylor's Benefit)
17 — The Castle Spectre	The Children in the Wood (Mr. Jones's Benefit)
19 — The Castle Spectre	The Sicilian Romance (Benefit Colonel Mayberry, Treasurer)

CHAPTER XX

Fall Season, 1799
Sudden Death of the Leading Lady,
Mrs. Williamson, November 1 —
Sudden Death of Mr. Edward Jones, one of
the Managers of the Theatre, November 22.

First Appearance in Charleston of
Mr. and Mrs. Marshall and the Dancer, Mr. Boree,
Mr. and Mrs. Prigmore, and Mr. Leoval.
New Plays and Pantomimes this Season:
The Wandering Jew; Lovers' Vows; The Jew and
The Doctor; The Generous Cottager; Family
of the Harlequins; Harlequin Skeleton.
Permanent Closing of the City Theatre.

CHAPTER XX

The last Theatrical Season had been finished at the Charleston Theatre, owing to repairs being made after the accident in the City Theatre in February, 1798.

On July 17 appeared a notice from the City Theatre in Church Street stating that the Managers had renewed the lease of that theatre, and that one of the co-partners had already gone to *"the Northward" to make additions to the company.*

"They also acquaint those who were fearful of the accident last season that a strict and full examination has been made through every part of the house by a number of the first reputed Master Builders of the City," who declare:

We the undersigned state that in our opinion the house is much stronger than it ever was and consequently safe for any audience.

John Mackay
William Leacroft
Andrew Nights
John G. Spidel
Gilbert Chalmers
Robert Brodie
John Nivison.[1]

Messrs. Williamson, Jones and Placide were now in thorough working harmony and looked forward to a full-flowing, peaceful succession of events in their particular line, but Fate stepped in and altered all their plans.

The first arrivals for the fall season were mentioned in the day's shipping news, October 14:

"Mr. Chalmers, Mr. and Mrs. Jones, Mr. and Mrs. Prigmore and Mr. and Mrs. Turnbull, Comedians, came

[1] Advertisements, Theatrical Bills, Criticisms, etc., this season taken from the South Carolina *State Gazette* and Timothy's *Daily Advertiser.*

passengers in the sloop Aurora. Mrs. Oldmixon of the Philadelphia Theatre is engaged and daily looked for."

Ten days later appeared the first advertisement of the opening of the City Theatre, with the tragedy of Hamlet, etc. The bill follows:

OCTOBER 28.
Hamlet, Prince of Denmark

Hamlet, ...Mr. Chalmers
(being his first appearance here these four years)
Horatio, ...Mr. Prigmore
(from the Theatre New York — Being his first appearance here)
King, ...Mr. Turnbull
(his first appearance here these four years)
Laertes, ...Mr. Taylor
Polonius, ...Mr. Hughes
Rosencrantz, ...Mr. Ryder
Guildenstern, ...Mr. Lewis
Marcellus, ...Mr. Solomons
Grave Digger, ...Mr. Jones
Ghost, ...Mr. Williamson
Queen, ...Mrs. Jones
Player-Queen, ...Mrs. Hughes
Ophelia, ...Mrs. Williamson
To which will be added the Farce, "Barnaby Brittle, or A Wife At Her Wits-End."

Mr. Prigmore, the only new actor at this performance, made his American début at the Southwark Theatre, Philadelphia, as *Lissardo* in "The Wonder," September 26, 1792. His acting was said to be "truly up to nature."

After Mr. Chalmers' stormy farewell to this city four years before, it was not thought likely that he would ever return, but through the genial Mr. Jones he decided to come again, for he had received many social courtesies from the citizens, and his only grievance was with Mr. Sollee and his orchestra.

The companies rarely started the season with their full complement, owing to their dependence on winds and tides, but added to their numbers as sloops and brigantines could make port.

In between the duties required of her during the past summer, in songs and dances at her husband's Vauxhall Gardens, Mrs. Placide had studiously applied herself to mastering characters in high comedy and Shakspearian rôles, as she was to start this season as Mrs. Williamson's understudy, and Fate decreed that she should be tried out at the first performance. Mrs. Williamson was billed as *Ophelia,* but Mrs. Placide took the part, with no explanation following:

THEATRICAL CRITICISM:

The City Theatre opened on Monday evening with the tragedy of Hamlet. The house though not crowded was full, and the performers were welcomed with lively plaudits of approbation. The part of *Hamlet* "take it for all in all" was well supported by Mr. Chalmers. In some of the scenes he was excellent; in others his voice and gestures were too much empassioned. Hamlet's beautiful soliloquy on death was well delivered; and that on his mother's marriage was pronounced with an emphasis that riveted attention.

The *Ophelia* of Mrs. Placide was sweet and interesting; this pleasing actress never appeared in a character that was better suited to her talents and she entered fully into the idea of the immortal bard.

Mr. Prigmore was respectable in *Horatio*; this character gives the player but little scope to display his powers, but if we may judge from Mr. Prigmore's performance this evening, he promises to be a valuable acquisition to our theatrical corps.

The older characters of the tragedy were pretty well supported and the farce went off with great spirit.

David Garrick, who was head and shoulders above any of his contemporaries, inaugurated the Star-system in England, and Nance Oldfield was the first in the line of beautiful and gifted women to head the galaxy which came after, shining from time to time in various theatrical firmaments. The eighteenth century stars that inaugurated the system in Charleston were Mr. Chalmers, Mrs. Whitlock, Mrs. Williamson, Mrs. Chambers, and Mrs. Placide.

On Friday of the opening week, October 30, was played "The West Indian" and "The Purse." "The

Dramatist" and "The Poor Soldier" were advertized for November 1, but postponed for the saddest fatality ever happening among the Charleston players.

Not only the theatrical profession, but Charlestonians at large, were deeply shocked and grieved when the news was given out on Saturday that the beautiful Mrs. Williamson had suddenly died: "Thursday night after an illness of only three days, died in her twenty-sixth year, Mrs. Louisa Williamson, wife of Mr. Williamson of the Theatre."

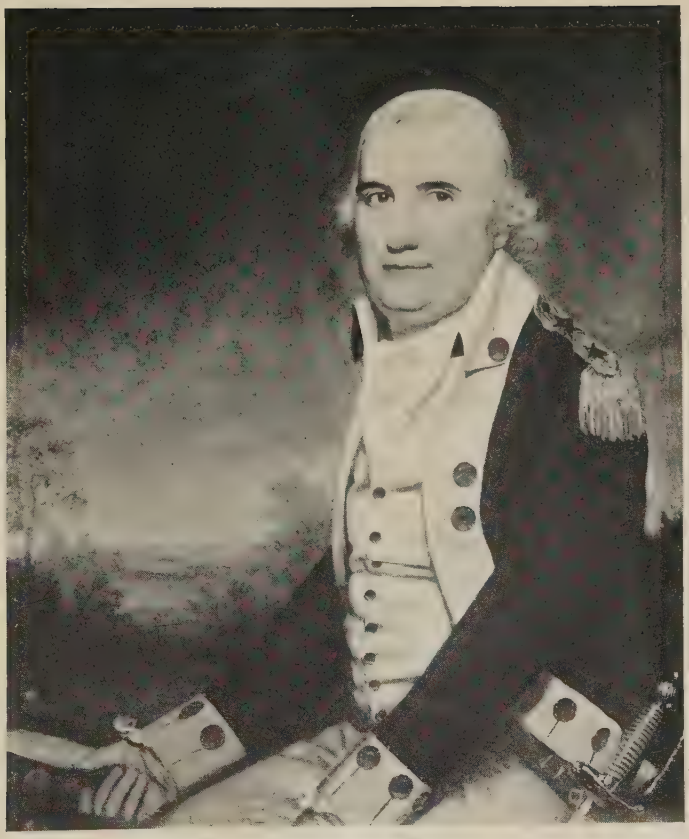
"As an actress," says the obituary notice, "the public has sustained an irreparable loss. Her professional talents were universally allowed; her private virtues were known only to a few in this country, but they have left an indelible impression on the minds most acquainted with them. 'Life is a play upon the Stage,' says Seneca, 'it signifies not how long it lasts, but how well it is acted'."

An Elegy to the memory of Mrs. Williamson appeared two days after her death, in the *State Gazette*, November 1, marked by sympathetic and lofty thoughts well expressed.

The theatre remained closed almost a week as a mark of respect, but engaged actors were to be paid and the acting profession is not allowed long periods of mourning, so the postponed bill was given on November 4, but Mr. Williamson's place was filled by another and he remained away from the theatre almost two months.

Mrs. Chambers (née Charlotte Sully) was engaged to take a certain number of Mrs. Williamson's parts, and she and Mr. Chambers appeared at the City Theatre on the re-opening night, he taking the role of *Kilmallock* and she the heroine *Agnes* in "The Mountaineers," and he as *Charles Stanley* and she as *Kitty Sprightly* in "All the World's a Stage."

A Prologue by Mr. Beresford, intended to have been



GENERAL CHARLES COTESWORTH PINCKNEY
(BY JAMES EARLE)

offered by Mrs. Williamson at the opening of the theatre in October — "but that Lady arrived too late and alas! departed too soon" — appeared in the *City Gazette and Daily Advertiser,* Friday, December 13, 1799.

On November 8, when the comedy showed Mr. Chalmers as *Young Wilding* in "The Liar," it was noticed for the first time that the title was spelled in the modern way, and not "Lyar" as heretofore — one of the straws pointing the way to the approaching modernization.

The company as it now stood in point of precedence was —

Mr. Chalmers and Mrs. Chambers; Mr. Taylor second to Mr. Chalmers; Mr. and Mrs. Placide, Mr. and Mrs. Jones, Mr. and Mrs. Prigmore, Mr. and Mrs. Hughes, Mr. and Mrs. Turnbull, Mr. Chambers, Mr. Lege, Mr. Ryder, Mr. Solomon, Mr. Lewis.

The splendid old English comedies, with their wit, rhythm, and flow, and their ability to lift one from the humdrum vale of every day to the mountain ranges of ecstasy, never weakened their hold upon eighteenth-century audiences, and each Stock company required the mastery of a certain number of them by their members.

"She Stoops to Conquer" was given November 15, with Mr. Chalmers as *Young Marlow,* one of his most notable characters, and Mrs. Placide as *Miss Hardcastle;* Mr. Jones was *Tony Lumpkin,* and Mrs. Chambers *Miss Neville.* This was Mrs. Placide's first elevation to a high-comedy rôle, and it would be interesting to know how she acquitted herself, but very few criticisms were then appearing.

Elizabeth Sully, who had left Charleston to join, with Mr. and Mrs. Chambers, the Baltimore Company for the season of 1795, had also returned to Charleston,

and her first re-appearance here was as the *Girl* in "Children of the Wood," with Mr. Chambers, her brother-in-law playing *Walter,* and her sister, *Josephine.* After the comedy of "Notoriety," the same evening, Mr. Chalmers delivered an Epilogue written by himself.

The fall season drew sadly to a close, for death again claimed another shining light from the ranks of the players. On November 22, the *Gazette* announced:

> Died yesterday morning Mr. Edward Jones Comedian and one of the Managers of the City Theatre. By the death of this gentleman the stage has sustained an irreparable loss. To panegyrize his talents as an actor were unnecessary; all have seen him, all have admired his powers and confessed that in the comic scene he stood unrivalled..... A few hours before his dissolution he took a most affecting leave of his wife and four young children who are left to mourn his loss.

Mr. Jones was ill only a few days. The obituary notice in another paper stated that he was in the thirty-fifth year of his age. As he died at night, unexpectedly, the theatre programme was given on the evening of his death — "The Gentleman and The Critic."

Mr. Jones had always been known as a man of the sweetest and most generous nature, and, as he was fully conscious up to a moment or two before expiring he realized as a manager the difficulty and confusion of again postponing theatrical performances, and probably requested that the advertized performances should be uninterrupted, for only two days after his death Hamlet was again played, with the first evening's cast.

Charlestonians were saddened in giving sepulture to five distinguished players within five years: Mrs. Pownall, Miss Mary Wrighten, Mr. Bignall, Mrs. Williamson, and Mr. Jones.

A new comedy was produced in Charleston for the

first time on November 27, called "Lovers' Vows," with Mr. Chalmers and Mrs. Placide leading in *Frederick* and *Amelia.*

The audacious, exciting, and stirring pantomime, "Don Juan," was constantly galloping through the bills, and, as though to palliate some of its risqué passages, attention was always drawn to the fact that it was newly dressed for every occasion.

December 2 brought forward a new ballet-dancer, Mr. Boree, with a Hornpipe. "Lovers' Vows" was repeated the same evening followed by the musical farce "My Grandmother," with Mr. and Mrs. Chambers leading.

That the course of true love never did run smooth was poignantly experienced by Mrs. Placide, who was cast as *Juliet* to Mr. Chambers's *Romeo* for Wednesday evening, December 4. On that day the theatre bill was preceded by the following notice:

"The public are respectfully informed that on account of Mrs. Placide's indisposition, the performances intended for this evening are postponed till tomorrow evening," etc., and, following the bill, this: "A gross misrepresentation respecting the illness of Mrs. Placide, too evidently labored under during the performance on Monday evening, having been circulated in the theatre, in vindication of that implicit respect Mrs. Placide must ever pay to a Charleston audience (too gratefully impressed to countenance even the slightest imposition), the certificate of the physicians is here presented to them."

The nature and appearance of Mrs. Placide's indisposition produced an impression on the audience last Monday evening at the theatre that it arose from violence. Mr. Placide called on us

yesterday morning for our opinion of Mrs. Placide's case. We found her complaint to be a considerable inflammation and swelling of the glands of the left side of her neck, the effects of which were extended to all that side of her face, and occasioned no doubt, by cold.

M. Irvine
John Ramsay.

This was the first suspicion ever breathed of any disagreement between Mr. and Mrs. Placide or any hint of personal violence. While Mr. Placide was exacting in his demands upon his young wife in an ambitious way for her advancement in her profession (being just as indefatigable and unsparing of himself), he seemed to be a devoted husband. To impersonate *Juliet,* the apex of any young actress's aspirations, with a swelled face and stiff neck, smarting under a public suspicion of personal violence by her husband, was a terrible ordeal; but it was in the line of duty, and Mr. Chalmers was exacting of his payment for each engaged performance, so the plucky little woman nerved herself for the task and accomplished it, under the plaudits, no doubt, of a sympathizing audience.

There were new dances between the tragedy and the farce by Mons. Lege and Mr. Boree, and the special music, always arranged for the Solemn Dirge over *Romeo* and *Juliet,* was sung by Mrs. Chambers, Miss Elizabeth Sully, Mrs. Hughes, Mrs. Prigmore, and Messrs. Chambers, Ryder, and Solomon.

The swelling went down, they no doubt kissed and made up, and the disagreeable occurrence blew over. The only extenuation for Mr. Placide was that, as sole manager of the theatre for the time being, he was at high nervous tension, with the usual exacting duties, augmented by the difficulty of adjustment after the loss

to the company of the leading lady and one of the managers within a month, and many postponements, and extra expense in bringing on Mrs. Chambers to fill Mrs. Williamson's place.

To draw attention away from *Juliet* a farce was introduced, which had not before been acted here, "The Wandering Jew," then performing in London with unbounded applause.

This was repeated at the next performance, when a new pantomime was given, called "The Generous Cottager," followed by the fascinating ballet, "The Milliners," Mrs. Chambers being *Madame Chiffon,* the Milliner, with Mrs. Hughes and Mrs. Placide as her assistants, all pirouetting with their latest creations on their heads.

With Mrs. Williamson gone, and her husband still away mourning her loss — and Mr. Jones departed — the work that three men had undertaken was now all upon the shoulders of one man, Mr. Placide. His ambitions for his wife he was now able to further by keeping her more than ever in the centre of the stage, and she was taking leading parts in the comedies, farces, and pantomimes, and retaining her ascendency in the ballets.

Mrs. Chambers' gifts were similar to her own, and they sang together, danced together, and liked similar theatrical rôles. They both sang in a Grand Concert of Voice and Instrumental Music for the benefit of one of the Musicians, Mons. Labatut, on December 14, at Mrs. Coates's Carolina Coffee-House, and they danced together often between acts. When Mrs. Placide

took the frolicsome part of the *Merry Girl,* Mr. Chambers stepped with her a Mock Minuet.

Mr. Williamson returned to the theatre towards the close of December and joined in the comedy of "King Henry IV, or the Humours of Sir John Falstaff," playing in the title-role, with Mrs. Placide as *Lady Percy,* Mr. Chalmers as *Hotspur,* and Mr. Chambers as *Prince of Wales.*

Very few theatrical criticisms were given this season, and the published casts were not as numerous as heretofore.

It was in the new pantomime that followed the Shakspeare play, "Harlequin Skeleton," that *Harlequin* remarks to *Pluto*: "If you roast all the people who cheat the nation, you must very often be damnably put to it for spits" — which might still elicit a laugh.

Another new comedy was given December 21, "The Jew and the Doctor, or Moral Prescriptions" — "Performing in London with the most brilliant success."

As Charleston had the third theatre in America, antedating the Boston theatre by nearly sixty years, the citizens still felt a little more satisfaction in having a new play acclaimed by London, than by either New York, Philadelphia, or Boston.

Mrs. Centlivre's comedy, "The Wonder: A Woman Keeps a Secret," was given December 23 to an enthusiastic audience. This was one of the most popular comedies of the century, and many of the great lights, from Garrick down, had made stage reputations as *Don Felix,* and from Mrs. Oldfield down as *Violante.* A noteworthy occasion of its production in New York in 1768 was when a delegation of Cherokee Indians from

South Carolina went to ask the interposition of General Gage in mediating a peace with the Six Nations. They expressed a desire to see a play acted, and this was the play given, followed by the pantomime "Harlequin Collector."

The Cherokee chiefs and warriors, in return, entertained the audience at the end of the pantomime with an Indian War Dance.

The night after Christmas, a jolly Harlequinade, with "The Clown Metamorphosed," followed "George Barnwell," which was a seasoning of bitter herbs with the sweet, but the startling and rapid changes and mystery of magic, with colored lights and gay grotesque costumes and dances of Harlequin, Columbine, and the Clown drew the attention away from the sad play, which was often given at holiday seasons when juveniles were to be present, to point the pit falls of pleasant dalliance and the straight and narrow path to be trod towards duty.

"Memory is a lute upon which divers chords are played," and the holiday season seemed a reminiscent one to the theatrical folk in Charleston, and some psychological twist always induced them to revive old tragedies instead of comedies at this festival; yet, withal, the minor chords of a passing era may have had their effect this year, with the going out, with the tides of the time, two beautiful and friendly souls.

December 28 — "Douglas" headed the bill followed by "The Wood Cutters" and "Children in the Wood." Home's tragedy of "Douglas" was suggested, it is said, by the pathetic old Scottish ballad "Gil Morrice:"

"This night a Douglas your protection claims;
A wife! a Mother! Pity's softest names,
The story of her woes indulgent hear
And grant your suppliant all she begs — a tear."

Young Mrs. Placide labored under too heavy a handicap when Fate spoiled her *Juliet* to be willing to repeat her part again this season; so when "Romeo and Juliet" was again announced, so was a new actress for the part — Mrs. Marshall, who came to make her first bow in this city in the character, one of her best drawing-cards. She had been playing in Philadephia, whither she had gone fresh from Covent Garden in 1794. She was accompanied by her husband, who played the part of *Bagatelle* in "The Poor Soldier," following the tragedy, on December 31, 1799.

Sixty-five theatrical productions had been satisfactorily received this season, with the company working under a tremendous strain and with sad hearts.

Six new pieces and six new players had been brought to Charleston in the short season of two months. In the difficult circumstances, all acquitted themselves well, and the curtain fell, on the 31st of December, upon a sad but notable year in the history of the Charleston Theatre.

PRODUCTION AT THE CITY THEATRE, FALL SEASON, 1799;
Under the Management of
MESSRS. WILLIAMSON, JONES AND PLACIDE.

1799	*Comedy or Tragedy*	*Pantomime, Farce, and Musical Pieces.*
Oct.		
26	Hamlet	Barnaby Brittle
30	The West Indian	The Purse
Nov.		
4	The Dramatist	The Poor Soldier
6	The Fair Penitent	The Quaker
8	The Liar	The Two Bear Hunters Catherine and Petruchio

FALL SEASON—1799

Comedy or Tragedy	*Pantomime, Farce, and Musical Pieces.*
11 — Wild Oats	The Farmer
13 — The Mountaineers	All the World's a Stage
15 — She Stoops to Conquer	Family of the Harlequins
18 — Notoriety	The Children in the Wood
21 — Suspicious Husband	Don Juan
23 — The Gamester	The Critic
25 — Hamlet	Family of the Harlequins
27 — Lovers' Vows	No Song, No Supper
29 — Love in a Village	Don Juan
Dec.	
2 — Lovers' Vows	My Grandmother
5 — Romeo and Juliet	The Wandering Jew
7 — The Wandering Jew	The Generous Cottager, The Critic, The Milliners
9 — Lovers' Vows	The Agreeable Surprise The Milliners
11 — A Cure for the Heartache	The Quaker The Two Quakers, or The Merry Girl
13 — The Stranger	Love à la Mode
16 — Everyone Has His Faults	High Life Below Stairs
18 — King Henry IV	Harlequin Skeleton
20 — King Henry IV	Harlequin Skeleton
21 — The Jew and the Doctor	Inkle and Yarico
23 — The Wonder	The Jew and the Doctor The Wood Cutters
26 — George Barnwell	Harlequin Skeleton
28 — Douglas	Children in the Wood The Wood Cutters
31 — Romeo and Juliet	The Poor Soldier

CHAPTER XXI

Season of 1800 under Williamson and Placide.

Memorial performance with the Theatre in mourning for General George Washington.

Début of Mrs. Ryder as *Miss Leeson* in "School for Wives;" Prologue by Mr. Williamson.

First productions in Charleston of "Pizarro," "The Heir-at-Law," "Columbus, or America Discovered," "The Count of Narbonne," "Penance for Polygamy," "Cora, or The Virgin of the Sun," "The School for Citizens," "False Shame, or The American Orphan in Germany," and "The Man of Fortitude, or The Knight's Adventure."

Permanent closing of the City Theatre, December 31, 1800.

CHAPTER XXI

The new year came in under a cloud. Instead of pealing forth joyously, as usual upon festive occasions, St. Michael's bells were tolling.

The life of the greatest American had ebbed out toward the close of the year just ended, and the nation was in mourning. On January 1, Charlestonians were called to the City Hall "to concert some plan of showing to the world the grief they feel at being deprived of him who was at once the sword and shield of their country, General George Washington."

"The City Theatre, also impressed with reverence and deeply affected in common with its fellow citizens," set about preparing an elaborate programme of mourning. The South Carolina State *Gazette and Timothy's Daily Advertiser*, and the City *Gazette and Daily Advertiser,* published by Freneau and Paine, each bore an article on General George Washington, within mourning bands, during the month of January.

These two publications furnish the theatrical material used herein for the year of 1800.

At the Citizens' meeting in the City Hall it was resolved that mourning should be general, as expressed "by wearing a crape on the left arm for thirty days," and that a subscription be opened "to raise a sum of money for the purpose of erecting a Statue to the memory of the late General George Washington, either pedestrian in marble or equestrian in bronze."

The Cincinnati Society honored the memory of its first president by the resolve "to go into mourning for three months by each member appearing every Sunday

in full uniform with the insignia of the Society, a crape on the left arm, and their swords dressed with love ribbon." All the country followed these examples, and the first month of the last year of the century was hung with crape.

January 14, Dr. David Ramsay delivered an oration on General George Washington in St. Michael's Church, and the Theatre Managers announced that "on account of the Intended Solemnity" there would be no performance at the theatre on that date. January 17, the City *Gazette* printed an "Irregular Ode on the Lamented Death of General Washington," written by Mr. Marshall of the Theatre.

The Theatre's Washington Memorial was celebrated January 18. The bill, printed between deep black head- and tail-pieces, follows:

CITY THEATRE

This evening the 18th inst., the Managers beg leave to announce, with that deference and respect due to the occasion, their intention of exhibiting

The Theatre
In Mourning

A Monument bearing the Bust of the late General George Washington.
Chief Mourners and Supporters.
Columbia and Liberty.
At the same time will be performed

A Solemn Dirge

The vocal parts by Mr. Marshall, Mr. Chambers, Mr. Prigmore, Mr. Turnbull, Mr. Ryder, Mr. Solomon, Mrs. Placide, Mrs. Marshall, Mrs. Chambers, Mrs. Hughes, Miss Sully, etc.

Columbia, ...Mrs. Placide
Liberty, ...Mrs. Jones

To conclude with an occasional address by
Mr. Williamson

After which that patriotic and much admired play in five acts, called

The Roman Father, or
The Deliverer of His Country

Publius Horatius, ...Mr. Chalmers
Tullus Hostilius, ...Mr. Turnbull

Valerius, ...Mr. Ryder
Citizens, Mr. Williamson, Mr. Prigmore, Mr. Chalmers, Mr. Placide, Mr. Solomon
Messenger, ...Mr. Lewis
Horatius, ...Mr. Marshall
Horatia, ...Mrs. Marshall
Valeria, ...Mr. Placide

In Act. 4th, The Triumphal Entry of Publius into Rome with a Grand March and Chorus. The whole to conclude with
A Dancing Ballet

This production filled the house to capacity, as shown by an advertisement on January 21 which stated that "The Ladies and Gentlemen who were disappointed of places on Saturday last, are respectfully informed that the managers of the City Theatre at the solicitation of several families intend putting the Theatre in Mourning again the 22d instant," etc.

This criticism appeared in the same paper:

THEATRICALS.

On Saturday evening last the Managers of the City Theatre presented the Citizens with a Mourning exhibition.....

The performances were commenced by solemn martial music,..... which was taken up by the orchestra in a moving strain or two while the curtain was rising.

The melancholy appearance of the boxes and galleries hung in black, prepared the mind in some measure for what was to follow, but the extraordinary effect of black scenery and a mausoleum surmounted with the bust of the illustrious Washington, which though necessarily coarse in its execution, was nevertheless a good likeness, were objects so striking in themselves and so momentous in their application as to exceed expectation.

The feelings of a large auditory were anxiously expressed by a most profound silence.....

Mr. Williamson then came forward with his Eulogy as a close to the solemnities.

We will not pretend to say what particular degree of literary merit belongs to this production. We consider it altogether, a most superb entertainment.....

It is to be hoped the liberality of the Manager will so far outweigh every private consideration as to allow himself to be prevailed upon to give so good a piece to the public.

The Roman Father very properly succeeded this tribute to departed worth; but the Ballet was ridiculous.

So frivolous an ending of a solemn occasion showed

that for once Mr. Placide's artistic sense of the fitness of things had forsaken him.

Both the South Carolina and City *Gazettes* were running daily theatrical advertisements during this season for, while performances were only given tri-weekly till Race Week, advance notices appeared.

Towards the end of January the "thin houses" had been somewhat augmented, and on the 24th the much advertized new play, "Pizarro," with Mr. Chalmers in the title-rôle and Mrs. Placide as *Elvira,* made a brave showing of: "New Scenery, Machinery, Dresses and Decorations, particularly a prospective view of Quito, the Capital of Peru; a view of the Peruvian and Spanish Camps; a view of the Recess or Stronghold of the Peruvians; a view of the Waterfall and Bridge on which the gallant Rollo is shot; a Superb Temple dedicated to the Sun with a Solemn Sacrifice. ..... This superb scenery was painted by Jones the artist who designed and painted the New Theatre at Boston."

A Subscriber comes forward with the following:

THEATRICAL ECONOMY:

Any person possessed of an imagination, not altogether sterile, and desirous of seeing a good play, but unable or unwilling to repair in propria persona to the theatre, has nothing else to do to riot in the full enjoyment of his wishes, but to suppose his chair a playhouse box, the paper or paint on the walls of his apartment, the scenery of St. Cloud's, and then to peruse the proceedings of the representatives of the Great Nation on the 10th day of November, 1799.

The review of the troops at 11 o'clock in the forenoon, may be considered the Prologue and the Consular Proclamation the Epilogue to the piece, which may be called "The New Revolutionary Farce," and if he is not perfectly amused with the entertainment, — if he does not see it as the richest comic scene ever arising out of what has heretofore been considered the most serious incidents, he may certainly be pronounced a sulky Democrat or a foe to fun.

Notwithstanding, "Pizarro, a Tragedy taken from the German Drama of Kotzebue and adapted to the English

Stage by Richard Brinsley Sheridan," met with such an enthusiastic reception by Charlestonians that it was given to crowded houses, and on January 28 — "The Managers beg leave to announce, on account of the demand for place for the play of 'Pizarro,' it will be performed this evening and tomorrow evening; after which the scenery, etc., will be obliged to be removed to make room for other pieces in preparation."

On February 3 was presented for the first time in Charleston the new and popular comedy in five acts, "performing in London with the greatest applause, called 'Laugh When You Can,' by Frederick Reynolds, author of 'the Dramatist'," etc.

Apropos of "Pizarro," the South Carolina *Gazette and Timothy's Daily Advertiser* of January 28, carried this open letter:

THEATRICALS.

A frequenter of the public amusements this winter has waited with some degree of impatient surprise, to see those vehicles of public opinion the newspapers, giving to the Managers of the Theatre the commendations due to them for the liberality of expense and uncommon exertions with which they have brought forward the elegant entertainment of "Pizarro," as a criterion of the public taste. The citizens of Charleston are indebted their best support to productions of this description; which in themselves are interesting and instructive amusements; and to strangers, exhibit a pleasing demonstration of the liberality with which they are received, etc.

Many patriotic citizens were still refraining from public gaieties and did not immediately accept with relish the melodramas which had just come over from Germany, with stark realism shutting off all the mystery and poetry of illusion.

Anticipating big houses during the Jockey-Club Races, it was published on February 10:

There will be performances at the Theatre every evening this week. This Evening, 10th inst. will be presented for the first time, a Grand Historical Play in five acts, called,

Columbus
Or, America Discovered
Written by Thomas Morton, author of "Children in the Wood," etc.

Columbus, ...Mr. Williamson
Alonzo, ...Mr. Marshall
Harry Herbert, ...Mr. Chalmers
Dr. Dolores, ...Mr. Turnbull
Bribon, ...Mr. Prigmore
Roldan, ...Mr. Taylor
Valerdo, ...Mr. Lewis
Moscoso, ...Mr. Solomon
Captain, ...Mr. Lotti

Indians

Orazimbo, ...Mr. Chambers
Solasco, ...Mr. Ryder
Catalpo, ...Mrs. Turnbull
Cuts, ...Mr. Johnson
Cora, ...Mrs. Jones
Netti, (with an Epilogue), ...Mrs. Marshall

With new and superb Scenery, Machinery, Dresses and Decorations, viz: The Sea-beach and landing of Columbus with the Ceremony of erecting the Sacred Banner.

A grand procession of Orazimbo in a magnificent Triumphal car.

A sublime display of the effects of an Earthquake which rends asunder the grand portico of the Temple of the Sun, discovers the interior and the Priests clinging to the altar.

Together with the brilliant representation of the Eruption of a Volcano.

As though this were not enough for one evening, it was followed by the musical entertainment of "The Farmer."

The City *Gazette* printed the Epilogue to the comedy "Laugh When You Can," written by Mr. Beresford of this city, and spoken by Mrs. Placide on February 7. The Jockey-Club Races began February 12, with an unusually long list of entries.

The musical farce, "The Purse," was generally offered as one of this week's attractions, and on the opening night of performances usually selected by members of the club it followed "Lovers' Vows."

On February 24 began the Theatre Benefits.

MRS. JONES

Begs permission to lay her Benefit before the Ladies of Charleston and respectfully solicits their countenance and protection.

This Evening, Feb. 24,

Will be presented the favorite and interesting play of

The Distressed Mother —

Andromache (the Distressed Mother)

Mrs. Jones.....

An Occasional address will be delivered by Mr. Chambers.....

During the play, the admired song, "O Richard, O My King" from the opera of Richard Cœur de Lion, by

Mrs. Marshall.....

A Horn-pipe by Mr. Lege and

The Popular Musical Farce,

The Adopted Child.

Gratitude for past enjoyment was shown in this:

COMMUNICATION.

How often the hardy roughness of the sailor encloses a generous humane and feeling heart.

A Tar, reading the Theatre advertisement—"On Monday the Distressed Mother, for the benefit of Mrs. Jones."

"What! is that the widow of the worthy little fellow who used to make us laugh so?" cried he (stifling a tear that began to glisten in his eye).

"Ay, Ay," said his mess-mate, "tis she, and four little chips of the old block to look up to her for their stores, rigging and education."

"Bless them," said the first! "You'll go, Jack and Tom and Ned and Harry, that's just one a piece. He that's gone aloft made us laugh often enough and, d—m me, if those that remain upon deck shall even cry, if a dollar of mine spent cheerfully in their service, can help to dry up their tears."

———

CITY THEATRE.

The only night of performance the remainder of this week

For the Benefit of

Mr. Chalmers

On Thursday Evening the 27th inst. will be presented a Tragedy, never performed in this Theatre, called

The Count of Narbonne:

Taken from the Castle of Otranto

Count of Narbonne, ...Mr. Chalmers

Countess of Narbonne, ...Mrs. Placide

Adelaide, ...Mrs. Marshall

A Patriotic Effusion called

The Federal Oath, or

Death and Liberty.

A Transparent Painting of the figure of Columbia on the altar of Liberty, painted by Mr. Belzon.

An Ode to the Union will be recited by Mrs. Chalmers.....

Several Songs, after which a Comic Piece, in one act, never performed here, called

Thelypthora,
or Penance for Polygamy.....
to which will be added a Comic after-piece called
Preparations for Privateering,
or The American Tars.

While Mr. Chalmers' Benefit performance was the only attraction at the theatre that week, "The Celebrated Maginnis from Edinburgh" was continuing his "Exhibition of Innocent Amusements at the Grand Pantheon, a little below the old Brick Market," where rich and brilliant representations of the heathen gods and goddesses were displayed, some of the groups majestically seated in the clouds and to descend to slow music. "Mr. Maginnis thinks proper to inform the Ladies and Gentlemen that Hades will not be presented in the pantheon, but rich paintings and machinery instead."

The Subscribers to the Married Men's Ball were called to meet at the Carolina Coffee-House; the Subscribers to the Bachelors' Ball at Mrs. Coates's; and the exhibition on the race track of "Young High-Flyer," an imported colt which was to be raffled at Mrs. Coates's at twenty-five dollars a chance with twenty-four numbers, were side-lines of interest.

This was a poor theatre year and the benefit attractions were less brilliant than formerly—fewer new players to call upon, so that individuals were largely thrown back upon their own resources. Mr. Chalmers's personal offering on his night was: "An Entertainment called 'Strange Adventures, or An Excursion to the country,' consisting of Recitation and Song. The Recitations wrote, the Songs selected and the whole to be spoken and sung by Mr. Chalmers." This was preceded

by "The Rivals" and followed by the comic opera, "The Flitch of Bacon," on March 10.

Mr. Turnbull's benefit brought to the notice of the public his song, "American True Hearts of Oak," dedicated to Captain Truxton in honor of his capture of the French frigate L' Insurgente, and a "Eulogium on Free Masonry" by Mr. Williamson.

March 14.

CITY THEATRE

Mr. Ryder's Benefit.

The Public in general and the generous sons of Hibernia in particular, are respectively informed that their Countryman's Benefit is fixed for this Evening, 14th instant.

On this occasion he puts his trust in their unfailing countenance and protection.....

The popular Comedy, The School for Wives.....

Miss Leeson (the young actress) — by Mrs. Ryder, being her first appearance on any stage.....

A Comic-Ballet called

The Two Hunters and the Milk-Maid,

To which will be added a farce, called

St. Patrick's Day,

or The Scheming Lieutenant

A Prologue will be spoken by Mrs. Jones on Mrs. Ryder's first appearance on any stage, written by Mr. Williamson.

This notice is pertinent to the times:

"The Gentlemen appointed by the City Council to obtain subscriptions for erecting a Statue to the Memory of the late General Washington, are requested to meet at the Exchange This Day at twelve o'clock.

Nathaniel Russel, Chairman."

March 14.

And this:

John Eckstein

Statuary, from Berlin,

"Now residing in Philadelphia, wishes to recommend himself to his friends, and those who are in need of

his assistance in the present time, when a general emulation is excited to commemorate the Virtues of a Washington. He once received from the Academy in London the highest premium as a Statuary. He was likewise applied to by Mr. Carter of London to design and execute the Monument of General Wolfe in Westminster, which he did. He was afterwards called to the Prussian Court, where Frederick the Second appointed him as Statuary, and was employed by him in that capacity for upwards of twenty years. Applications to be made in Philadelphia, Market Street, No. 211."

The Hibernians must have answered Brother Ryder's call in numbers, for at the next benefit, that of Mrs. Chambers, a delicate invitation was extended them again in the announcement that "for that night only" (March 17) Mrs. Chambers would appear as "Patrick, the Poor Soldier." She would also sing "The Sailor Boy," and Miss Sully would dance a Hornpipe, etc.

The German play by Kotzebue, "False Shame, or the American Orphan in Germany," was given for Mr. Taylor's benefit. This notice follows the announcement:

"This play is founded on facts which occurred while this country, unhappily, was the victim of military excesses and the seat of war, and falling within the knowledge of Augustus Kotzebue, through the return of the Hessian and German officers, he has wove the interesting materials into one of his chastest dramas. The character itself of the American Orphan is certainly one of the sweetest sketches of his inimitable pencil, and the warm reception she has met with in her

native country, is to the author the most flattering encomium. She is now for the first time restored to her native Charleston."

"The German Horror" is what this play was designated by some Charlestonians.

The "wetness" or the "badness" of the weather frequently interfered with theatre audiences, and Mr. Prigmore in a card confided to the public that his benefit barely made expenses, and calls on them again:

CITY THEATRE.

Mr. Prigmore presents his respectful compliments to the Ladies and Gentlemen of Charleston and begs leave to acquaint them that having failed in his first attempt for a benefit, he again intrudes on the public, by affixing his name to the bill with Mrs. Prigmore most humbly soliciting their patronage and support this Evening the 24th instant, which favor shall be ever gratefully remembered.

His choice, the popular opera "Robin Hood, or Sherwood Forest," and the comedy, "The Critic," were both good drawing cards.

At Miss Sully's benefit, March 26, "Secrets Worth Knowing" and "The Spoil'd Child" were given, and she danced "the Celebrated Juvenile Hornpipe composed by Signor Bianchi, junior, and danced by Miss Sully at the Theatre Royal, Dublin, upwards of thirty nights."

At Marshall's benefit one of the interpolations was a Glee and Chorus written by himself, called "Our Country's like a Ship of War," following "American True Blue, or the Naval Volunteers."

A Brother Actor speaks for him thus: "We hear that this evening is to be the last of our performances at the City Theatre. As it is allotted for the Benefit of that indefatigable servant of the public, Marshall, we sincerely hope that his attentive services will meet

an ample reward and enable him to bid farewell to the Old Theatre in a Bumper."

CHARLESTON THEATRE
Broad Street.

Theatre, Charleston, March 28, 1800 — The Managers, with due deference beg leave to announce.....for the better accommodation of the public, they will enter upon a lease of the Charleston Theatre..... Having undergone the necessary repairs and a total interior decoration, it will be opened on Monday next, March 31. The Managers beg leave further to announce that it is proposed after the recess of Passion week to commence a short season of twelve nights only. In the course of which the most fashionable novelties of the London Theatres, new Scenery and Stage Decorations will be produced, etc.

Mrs. Placide's Benefit opened the Charleston Theatre, March 31, with "Fontaineville Forest and a new Heroic Pantomime called 'Rinaldo and Armida, or The Assembly of Christians for the Conquest of Jerusalem'."

On April 2 appeared this business card, in the *City Gazette and Daily Advertiser*:

CHARLESTON THEATRE.

Those Gentlemen who are Proprietors of the Charleston Theatre, by purchase from the original Proprietors, or by a second resolution, allowing of further shares, will please to send their proofs to the Subscriber, by 12 o'clock This Morning, that he may be enabled to fill up their Tickets.

By order of the Committee,
W. P. Young.

A benefit performance for the Orphan House was given April 4, including the play "Cora, or the Virgin of the Sun;" "American True Blue, or The Naval Volunteers," and the Pantomime-Ballet, "The Milliners."

It is noted for the first time that acknowledgment of this courtesy was not made as heretofore by the Orphan House Board, through the public prints.

The season closed May 8, with a benefit for the children of the late Mr. Jones (former partner of Williamson and Placide).

The five-act comedy by Reynolds, "Laugh When You Can," was the chief attraction, ending with the musical farce, "Children in the Wood." Master Jones made his début in the comedy as *Charles Mortimer,* and he and his younger brother, Master J. Jones, were the children in the farce, while one of their young playmates, a pupil of Mr. Lege's, danced a Hornpipe for his début and their assistance.

The last year of the century was a most depressing one for the stage, and Charleston felt it so keenly that the season ended early in May and the usual fall performances were omitted entirely.

The members of the company, however, had made unusual exertions to help the poor situation, and original additions to the theatre bills in Eulogiums, Epilogues, Odes, Occasional Addresses, Glees, Choruses, and Songs had been produced by Mr. Williamson, Mr. Turnbull, Mr. Marshall, and Mr. Chambers. Mrs. Ryder made her début here as *Miss Leeson* in the "School for Wives," and eight new pieces were given for the first time.

After the close of the theatre in the city, the company availed itself of an opportunity to spend the summer at one of Charleston's favorite resorts.

The following notice appeared in the South Carolina *State Gazette and Timothy's Daily Advertiser*:

SULLIVAN'S ISLAND, JULY 8, 1800.

The Managers of the Charleston Theatre with the most respectful deference beg leave to announce to the public, that a spacious and well ventilated Salon is erected on an advantageous site to be distinguished as the South Carolina Lyceum.

Its object is the public accommodation, not merely as a Theatre but a Hall to comprehend every purpose of meeting, for utility, amusement and instruction.

A series of the best selected Dramatic Exhibitions

will be presented to consist of about Twenty Nights, etc.

Performances were given at The Lyceum through September. All the members of the company that had been playing in Charleston save Mr. Chalmers and Mr. and Mrs. Placide, made up the casts.

Mr. Placide's Vauxhall Garden with a band of music, illuminations, dancing, songs, and refreshments, with fire-works at stated times, opened its fifth season on May 15, and continued till the late fall.

On October 24, a student of Ambrosio St. Virico, the "great Italian Painter and Architect," advertized that he would present at the Church-Street Theatre "The Chinese Shades." These performances were given through November; the final curtain of this house being rung down on the thirtieth, leaving at last the Charleston Theatre without a rival. On December 31, appeared the notice: "A Masquerade Ball will take place tomorrow evening at the Anacreontic Concert Hall, late City Theatre."

Mr. Williamson and Mr. Placide continued partners for several seasons, and then the latter became sole manager of the Charleston Theatre and of a stock company which lasted until 1811. Matthew Sully and his sister Elizabeth belonged to this company, and were with Mr. Placide until 1810.

Alexander Placide was an indefatigable worker, and from the summer of 1795 he conducted an elaborate Vauxhall Garden between theatrical seasons. He and Mrs. Placide were both active and ambitious, and were on the high-road to comfort and competence. A little family was growing up around them, which later followed their parents' profession, and their oldest son

Harry became a noted actor. He took counter-parts to the great Power, when the latter was in Charleston, and this authority said of him, "no man on the London Boards excels Placide in his line of business."

PRODUCTIONS AT THE CITY THEATRE, SEASON OF 1800

Comedy or Tragedy	*Musical Piece, Farce or Pantomime*
Jan.	
1 — The Country Girl	Rosina
4 — The Belle's Stratagem	The Romp
6 — The Spoil'd Child	The Mountaineers
8 — The Heir at Law (1st time here)	The Jew and the Doctor
9 — The Stranger	Ballet — The Coopers
11 — The Heir at Law	The Coopers — Miss in her Teens
13 — The Heir at Law	The Coopers — Miss in her Teens
16 — The Merchant of Venice	My Grandmother
18 — Memorial Performance in honor of Gen. Washington	The Roman Father
20 — The Child of Nature	The Agreeable Surprise
22 — Repetition of the memorial performance	The Roman Father
24 — Pizarro, (1st time here)	No Song, No Supper
27 — Pizarro	The Highland Reel
28 — Pizarro	The Purse
29 — Pizarro	No Song, No Supper
31 — King Richard III	The Padlock
Feb.	
3 — Laugh When You Can (1st time here)	Village Sports, The Romp
5 — Pizarro	Love à la Mode
7 — Laugh When You Can	Harlequin Skeleton
10 — Columbus, or America Discovered (1st time here)	The Farmer
Mar.	
21 — The Deserted Daughter	The Adopted Child, (benefit Mr. Mayberry, Treasurer of the Theatre)
24 — Robin Hood	The Critic, (benefit Mr. and Mrs. Prigmore)
26 — Secrets Worth Knowing	The Spoil'd Child (Benefit Miss Sully)
28 — Wives as They Were and Maids as They Are	The Iron Mask (Benefit Mr. Marshall)
31 — Fontaineville Forest	Rinaldo and Armida
April	
2 — Pizarro	The Flitch of Bacon
4 — Cora, or The Virgin of the Sun	True Blue — The Milliners (Benefit The Orphan House)

Comedy or Tragedy	*Musical Piece, Farce or Pantomime*
14 — Preservation, or the Hovel of The Rocks	Homeward Bound — Man and Wife (Benefit Mr. Williamson)
16 — The Natural Son	The Two Woodcutters — Rosina (Benefit Mr. Turnbull)
21 — Preservation	Rinaldo and Armida
23 — Douglas	Rinaldo and Armida
25 — False Shame	The Liar
30 — The Country Girl	The Mountaineers (Benefit Mr. Marshall)
May	
2 — False Shame	Genevieve of Brabant (Benefit Mrs. Placide)
5 — The Man of Fortitude, or The Knight's Adventure (1st time here)	The Village Lawyer — Tom King, or Monsieur Tonson (Benefit Mr. Chalmers)
8 — Laugh When You Can	The Children in the Wood (Benefit the children of the late Mr. Jones)

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